

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1462.—VOL. LVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 9, 1891.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["DRINK THIS!" SAID ONE OF THE LADIES. "NOW, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAS HAPPENED?"]

## BERYL'S SECRET.

### CHAPTER III.

"MAMMA, do speak, or I shall go frantic!" The petitioner was a tall, bright-eyed girl, still in her teens, but with a little air of importance and authority—perhaps not unnatural in the eldest of six sisters.

Paulina Lyndon was nineteen, and had left school two years before; since which she had been consulted by her widowed mother, and looked up to by the younger girls in all things, so that it was not extraordinary that she had come to consider herself as decidedly "somebody" in the domestic kingdom.

"Basil is coming home," said Lady Lyndon. "He says," referring to a foreign letter received that morning, "he will be here in another week. Dear fellow! I shall be delighted to see him again!"

"And I shan't!" returned Paulina, who indulged in a most outspoken outpour. "He has stayed abroad all these years, and left us

to shift for ourselves, and I think we can go on doing so very well indeed!"

"You don't understand," said her mother, wisely. "You were only a child when your brother went away!"

"I was almost fourteen, and Sir Basil is only my half brother, really, you know, mamma!"

"He has done more for you and the others than many a whole brother," said her mother, feelingly. "It is time I told you the truth, Lina. It is a blow I would gladly have spared you, for I know it will hurt your pride, but I have no choice. When your father left England he had lost, through unfortunate investments and other disasters, every penny of my portion and every penny of his own savings. He was not in debt, but he possessed nothing in the world except Lyndon Hall and its revenues."

"Two thousand a year," said Paulina, equably. "Well, I am sure, it is quite enough for the humdrum way we live!"

Lady Lyndon sighed.

"Your father died suddenly within a month of landing at Sydney. He had not

even time to make a will. Lina, from the moment he died, Lyndon Hall and every penny of the income belonged to Basil. I was left utterly penniless; and, but for my stepson's generosity, I could not have kept a roof over your heads."

Paulina grew white as a sheet. This was a terrible revelation!

"I thought everything was yours!" she faltered. "I am sure it ought to have been."

"Basil wrote home to me at once," went on the widow, gently. "He said a heavy private trouble prevented him returning to England, but that he had instructed his father's lawyer to assist me in every possible way, and to pay over to my credit the whole of his income, except five hundred pounds. He meant this arrangement to continue all the time Lyndon Hall was let. When the time expired he hoped to come home, and put things on a different footing."

"It was impossible to refuse his generous offer, for he gave me no address. My letters to him at Sydney were returned through the dead-letter office. The five hundred a year and the rent of the Hall were paid—as

directed—to his account at a New York bank, but I have never attempted to trace him out. I felt he had some good reason for his wish to keep aloof from us; only I thought when the Letoms left the Hall we should surely hear from him."

"And he has been pretty quiet about it," pointed her daughter. "They only went out in June, and this is July."

"Basil wishes us all to go down to the Hall to welcome him. Lina, I don't often ask you to go against your wishes, but, my dear child, do think of all you owe your brother and be grateful to him."

"I hate being grateful, and I don't consider Sir Basil has done anything for me!"

"Lina!"

"He has deserted us all these years, and paid you so much money as a bribe not to trouble him! You may call that generosity, mother, I call it indolence!"

Lady Lyndon looked amazed.

"Paulina, where have you picked up these notions? Is it from Mr. Arnison?"

Paulina winced.

"He said the other night he thought Basil neglected us shamefully, and that if he had a mother and sisters he should not go roaming all over the world."

"I dare say he thinks himself a model of manly perfection!" said Lady Lyndon, rather irritably; "but that is not the point. Basil is my dear nephew, and I choose that all due deference and respect shall be shown him; so you and your sisters will accompany me to the Hall next Monday."

Something like a tear glittered in Paulina's bright eyes. For years unknown to her mother she had sorrowed after her old home, educated abroad, and never entering into society, she had never learned that the home was really hers no longer.

When, two years ago, Lady Lyndon had settled in London, she still lived in a very unostentatious way. Her girls were not "presented," they went to no balls or parties. To all entreaties the reply had been "wait till Basil comes home."

And now behold he was coming; and, lo! he, and not Paulina and her sisters, was to call the Hall his home. Basil was to have all, and the girls just be mere dependents on his bounty. It was gall and wormwood to a proud, ambitious nature like Lina's.

Her solitude was soon interrupted. Five or ten minutes after her mother went out a visitor arrived, and the parlormaid ushered him into the drawing-room, as a matter of course, for she had seen him at Glenlea so often that she regarded him almost as a member of the family.

And yet Philip Arnison was only an acquaintance of three years' standing. He had never been formally introduced to Lady Lyndon, and though he had drifted into a close intimacy with her and her girls, she could never feel certain that she liked him.

He was professor of English at the school attended by the Lyndon girls while they lived at Tours; and the summer before they returned to England he had been fortunate enough to save the life of Babette, the youngest child, then only five years old, by fishing her out of a pond into which she had fallen. That it was a brave act and a timely one none could deny.

Mr. Arnison called to inquire for the little one, and Lady Lyndon thanked him. Then he spoke of the two next girls, then his pupils at the school, and praised their abilities.

From this beginning, slight though it seems, he had drifted into an intimacy, which was warm enough when the Lydons left France, for the gentle widow to give him her address at Kensington, and invite him to call if he should ever be in London.

Just one year after their parting he availed himself of her kindness, told her he had given up teaching, and was supporting himself by his pen; and then seemed to take it for a matter of course that the old Tours friendship should be resumed.

Resumed it was. Babette and Floss were still young enough for pets; the next three were at boarding school, and Paulina had always appreciated Mr. Arnison.

He speedily took his old place in the family, escorted the ladies to church, walked with the children in the Park, brought offerings of new magazines or concert tickets; but was careful in all things never to overstep the line of friendship.

Lord Elton, calling on his sister-in-law, was delighted with "young Arnison," but the Countess shook her head.

"I wish Basil would come home and see to things. It does a girl no good to be intimate with a man who cannot marry her, and I for one hate prodigies!"

She managed to instil just sufficient of her own cautions into Lady Lyndon as to make that poor lady uneasy.

The mother suddenly became conscious Paulina quoted "Mr. Arnison" on every occasion. The friendly intimacy of the young man's visits began to jar upon his hostess. She had not seen many young men of late years, but she fancied Basil had been very different.

After all, how very little she knew of Philip Arnison! She had never heard him speak of his parents, his family, or his home. She absolutely had no idea of his income, or how he earned it—the "pen" being a vague phrase, since it would apply equally to a copying clerk and a fashionable novelist.

It seemed for her daughter's conscience told her she could not be indignant, since she had given them every chance of growing intimate. But how in the world could she present to Basil as his brother-in-law a man of whose antecedents she knew absolutely nothing?

But we have kept Philip waiting too long. When the maid had departed he drew his chair a little closer to Miss Lyndon's, and murmured critically,—

"I do believe you have been crying?"

"Something near it."

"What is the matter?"

She hesitated, but he fixed his eyes on hers—large, gleaming dark eyes, and she felt compelled to answer him in spite of herself.

"Basil is coming home!"

"The paragon of brothers! That is new. When is he coming? I thought you didn't even know where he was?"

"He writes from New York. He will be in England on Tuesday, and we are to go to Lyndon Hall to meet him."

"And does that explain your tears?"

"Phil," and she spoke his name as though she often used it, "don't torture me."

He got up then and went to her. He put his arm round her fondly, and kissed her twice.

"My darling, do you think I would let a hundred brothers come between us?"

"But mamma seems to think Basil perfection. I shouldn't wonder if she consented to live with him at the Hall—and then I should never see you!"

"I decline to contemplate that possibility. Why is Lady Lyndon so infatuated with Sir Basil? I thought he was only her stepson? Why should she sacrifice her own children to him?"

"Out of gratitude."

"Gratitude?"

Paulina blushed.

"Oh, I have been hearing bitter truths this afternoon, Philip. Mamma says we have been living on Basil's generosity all these years, and that but for his liberality she could not have kept a roof over our heads."

"Why do you look at me so intently, Paulina?" he demanded, quietly.

"I thought you would be horrified. Forgive me, Phil, but till to-day I thought I should have some portion, however small, when I married."

"I never thought so, dear! I have known ever since I came to England of the peculiar succession of the Lyndon property."

"Why is it peculiar? Doesn't property always go with the title?"

"Possibly. But in this case the entail is peculiar. If Sir Basil died everything would be yours. Your sisters would not take a penny. You would be the family benefactor then instead of Sir Basil."

"We need not think of that," she said, carelessly. "Basil is barely thirty, and he never ailed anything in his life."

"I suppose you remember him?"

"Why, of course I do. I was nearly fourteen when he and poor papa went to Sydney."

"Is he like you?" asked Mr. Arnison, who seemed very curious about the absent Basil.

"He is like none of us, unless it is Babette. But I will show you his photograph."

She fetched her mother's album, where there were likenesses of Basil in every stage, from a curly-headed boy in Eton dress up to one taken only a month before he left England.

"It is strange he has never written to you all these years?"

"He has been travelling about."

"Was he fond of you? It's not every man who likes his father to marry again, you know."

"Oh, he was very glad! He was only a little boy when mother married, and she was always devoted to him. If Barbara had been a boy she would have called her Noel—that is Basil's second name."

"Barbara means Babette."

"Yes, we are trying to get into calling her by her proper name."

"And Sir Basil returns on Tuesday! Is this our last meeting, Paulina?"

"Oh, you must come again!"

His hand closed over hers.

"I fancy sometimes your mother suspects our secret and that she does not like it."

"I am sure she suspects nothing!"

"You know, Paulina, you ought to do better. A woman's daughter should make a grander match than a mere literary hack."

"I shall never marry anyone but you!" declared Paulina. "If Basil doesn't like it he must out us!"

"And you are not afraid of poverty, my little girl?"

"I can bear anything with you."

They were quite alone. A great stillness reigned around. Presently the maid would appear with afternoon tea; but just then Lina and Philip Arnison were as usually alone as though they had been together on a desert island.

"I want you to do something for me, Paulina. You have confessed your love for me! Promise that no persuasion shall ever change that love."

"Phil, do you doubt me?"

"I don't doubt you, child," he said, fondly, "but I confess I fear your brother's influence."

Sir Basil may be ambitious for his beautiful sister. I want to bind you to me, Paulina, by a solemn oath, so that, even if cruelty parts us for a time, I may feel sure of your constancy."

She smiled.

"I don't think any oath is more binding on me than my love, but—I am willing."

"Repeat this after me!" he said, sternly, and again he fixed his passionate black eyes intently on the girl's face. "We two, loving each other very dearly, hereby swear to be faithful unto death, to cleave to each other in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow, in spite of friends and foes, until death do us part! You understand?" whispered Philip, after she had obeyed him; "you are infinite—mine utterly! If you ever married another it would be the blackest perjury!"

"I understand."

They were, indeed, a contrast. The girl, a fair type of English maidenhood, with blue eyes, golden hair, and a bright healthy complexion, tall and rather determined-looking. Just the picture of happy, healthy youth was Paulina Lyndon on this fair July afternoon, when she plighted her troth to Philip Arnison.

The sometime professor was much older than his fiancé.

Mr. Arnison owned to thirty, and looked more. He must surely have had foreign blood in his veins, for there was nothing English in his features. His dark, passionate eyes, his crisp, black hair, and pale, olive complexion, all indicated southern blood. He was of middle height, and though admirably proportioned, lacked the broad shoulders and stalwart limbs which mark a well-born, healthy Englishman.

It was a handsome face, but any one whose suspicions had once been aroused would have called it a crafty one.

Lady Elton, albeit not a clever woman had been quite right when she said to her sister,—

"No, I don't like your Mr. Arnison. I admit he is handsome, but I think there is something snakish about him. His eyes are too bright. Take care that he doesn't fascinate Pauline with them while he is preparing to devour her."

Lady Lyndon was not best pleased to find Mr. Arnison in her drawing-room when she came home, but she hid her annoyance gracefully; though, when she announced their speedy departure for the Hall, she was careful to give no chance of seeing him again that he could construe into an invitation.

"Our return to London is quite uncertain," she said, rather pointedly. "Even if Sir Basil had not returned I had intended to give up this house. Probably, next season I shall take the children abroad, and Miss Lyndon will go into society with her aunt, Lady Elton."

"Too late, my lady!" muttered Arnison, between his teeth, as he left the house. "Your discretion is wonderful, but it is a case of shutting the stable door after the steed is stolen. Unless I am very much mistaken, I shall go to Lyndon Hall one day as its master, and you will find yourself left out in the cold!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

BASIL LYNDON was still smarting from his wife's cruel renunciation when his father's sudden death transformed him into a baronet.

Had Gem only been true to him, their probation would have lasted a very brief time, was his first thought. He would have been able now to lavish every comfort on her, and again and again he asked himself why she had forsaken him.

He went over every incident of their brief honeymoon. He recalled every detail of the week they had spent at Sunbury, and he could find nothing to show her desertion was premeditated. She had seemed to him just a simple, tender-hearted girl, who clung to him with entire devotion and trust.

She had shown a shade of jealousy when he decided he must leave her in England while he went to Australia with his father; but this had soon passed, and they said good-bye on the best of terms.

The failure to meet him at the Crystal Palace had been a blow. The letter of explanation proved a sad disappointment to him. It showed her to be strangely different from the refined, sensitive child he had imagined her, but even that did not prepare him for the terse note awaiting him at Sydney.

"All is over between us. Farewell!"

Basil Lyndon's knowledge of law was vague to a degree. He had taken every precaution he could think of to make his marriage legal, and he believed it to be so, but he was not sure. Could it possibly be that Gem had consulted a solicitor, and discovered some flaw in the ceremony? It really looked like it. When his father's death made him "Sir Basil" the poor fellow quite expected his wife to write, and say she had changed her mind, and intended to claim her rights. But the weeks and months glided by, bringing no news of the girlish bride; and Basil gradually settled down to the belief that she meant just

what she said, and that, whether the ceremony which had passed between them was legal or not, he should bear no more of Gem.

She must have been false from the very first. She must have been trifling with him all along. She was utterly worthless, and he would forget her.

A very wise resolve, but one that proved hard to carry out. Five years after his wedding Sir Basil Lyndon still felt a pang at his heart whenever he recalled that week of happy idling at Sunbury. He had travelled half over the world, and he had met many women, lovelier and more fascinating than his child-wife, but he never saw a face which banished Gem's from his memory.

It never struck him how equivocal was his position. It never even occurred to him that he might love a second time, and then suffer untold anxiety as to whether he was free or wedded. He did not believe all women to be heartless syrens; but he knew none of them would ever drive the fair, false face of Gem from his heart. He would keep his secret safely locked there. He would not purge that worthless wife of his. She should go her own way, but he would never try to put another in her place, even though the good old name of Lyndon died out.

He always fixed on five years as the term of his absence, partly because, when the Letsons left Lyndon Hall, some fresh arrangements would have to be made about the property, and partly because he had a most erroneous notion that at thirty a man ceases to be the object of matrimonial match-making, and may settle down undisturbed as a bachelor.

These schemes for the future were vague. He hoped to live at the Hall, and had a fancy that, maybe, when her elder girls were married, his stepmother would come and bring the children to live with him.

He would not seek for Gem. He was thankful he had hidden nothing from her. She knew his name and rank. At any time during their separation she could have sent a letter to him, simply by directing it to Lyndon Hall, to be forwarded.

There was a kind of faint hope still in Basil's heart that sometime she would write. She might never choose to come back to him, never keep the truth she had pledged to him. But just to have known that all was well with her would have been an infinite comfort to his generous heart.

He took his passage for England in good spirits. The wound Gem's desertion had caused was not healed, but five years had numbed its pain. There were plenty of other men whose marriages had turned out badly, and he supposed he could bear his burden among the rest.

At least, he was spared one pang. No one could condole with him, for no living creature guessed his infatuation. He smiled as he remembered Lady Elton's hope that he would bring home "a bride from the Bush!" He hoped Aunt Juliet would not begin match-making on his account. She had far better reserve her energies for his little sisters.

He telegraphed from Queenstown to Lady Lyndon, and then felt a strange feeling of sadness creep over him as he realised for the first time the changes five years had made.

He was going home as "master." The pretty, graceful stepmother who had made the Hall such a happy home, was a widow, and dependent on his bounty. Lina, who had been a little girl in a pigtail and short frocks, was a marriageable young lady, and the nursery children were active schoolgirls. All would be changed.

He meant to go up to Euston by the mail-train, which left Liverpool soon after the ship came in. He would spend the night at an hotel, see his lawyer betimes the next morning, and then go down to the Hall.

Such was his programme. He little guessed how very different was to be the reality.

There was not many passengers by the two o'clock express. Perhaps many of those who landed from the *Dolphin* had friends in Liver-

pool, or, at least, preferred to lunch there before starting on the long railway journey south.

Sir Basil found no difficulty in discovering an empty first-class carriage, and not a creature attempted to invade his privacy. He fancied, indeed, that one or two ladies who passed the windows eyed him with a kind of awestruck pity.

"Surely I can't look quite a barbarian?" reflected Sir Basil, when he fancied he heard a boxom-faced country woman murmur, "Poor fellow!" as she went by his compartment and looked in. "What in the world frightens people so in my appearance? It can't be my manners, for they don't wait till I've spoken to turn away in disgust."

The time was just up when a benevolent-looking old gentleman came hastening down the platform, attended by the guard.

Sir Basil was unpleasantly conscious that this same old gentleman had been on the landing-stage when he left the *Dolphin*, and that he had contrived never for a moment to lose sight of him until he saw him established in his corner of the railway carriage.

He had felt irritated at this persistent watchfulness, but had tried to think it accidental. But the guard's words, as with a pass-key he threw open the door, had a strange significance.

"I thought it best to turn the key, sir. There's no accounting for these lunatics!"

He was gone before Sir Basil could demand an explanation; but the benevolent old gentleman, while seating himself opposite to the Baronet, contrived to offer a meaning to the guard's speech which was inoffensive.

"I am so terribly nervous," he said, apologetically; "and when I heard there was a poor mad fellow going up to London by this train, I gave the guard a sovereign to keep a seat in this compartment safe for me. I'd had a look at you, and I thought if the lunatic did get in you'd be a match for him."

He must have been a very nervous old gentleman, for his next act was to draw down the blinds of the right-hand window.

"I can't bear to be stared at," he explained; and Sir Basil began to think it was true a lunatic was travelling by this train, and that his neighbour was the identical man.

By this time they were fairly off. Basil wished they stopped at some station nearer than Crewe; for though not of a timid disposition, he did not like the looks of his companion. The old gentleman had drawn a little book from his pocket, and was studying it attentively, his head bent over it till his long grey hair dropped over his forehead, and got into his eyes, when he impatiently brushed it back with his right hand.

The hand was a revelation to Basil. It was not wrinkled or withered, as was the old man's face, but firm and white, the nails almond-shaped and beautifully-trimmed, the fingers long and lianesom. In a moment the truth flashed upon the Baronet. A young man does not "make up" for an old one without some urgent reason. Probably his fellow-traveller was a burglar escaping from justice.

He kept perfectly still. Something warned him the man was a desperate character, and that if he dreamed he was discovered he would take violent measures to secure his companion's silence. Basil felt thankful Crewe was less than an hour distant. He leaned back in his corner, and tried to keep calm; but, brave as he was by nature, no minutes had ever seemed more terrible to him, and the express train, though really going at full speed, appeared to him to crawl along.

He had purposely turned away from his unwelcome companion. He did not want to look at him, lest the expression of his face should betray to the other he had fathomed his disguise. Not for worlds would he have entered into conversation with him. He could only keep there, with the length of the carriage between them—waiting.

He would not watch, but he felt every movement of that terrible old man. He could have

told the very instant when he put aside his book and began to look out of the window, and then Basil knew danger was coming.

It came. With a sure unerring aim the stranger threw a small spear or javelin across the carriage. Another moment, and by a sharp, excruciating pain, Basil knew the weapon had entered his own breast.

He tried to move or call. Impossible! A dull faintness crept over him. He could hear the porter's voice as the train glided into Crewe station, but then everything was black!

"Don't go in there, miss, there's a lunatic in there!"

It was the guard's voice, the first sound which reached Basil after his swoon. By a desperate effort he uttered a cry for help.

"Stand aside, please!" said a woman's voice, quiet, gentle, but determined. "I am not afraid, and there is someone in trouble here."

Two ladies entered, in spite of the guard's remonstrances. One just glanced at Basil, and promptly ordered the guard to go for assistance; the other, a sweet-faced woman in mourning, went up to our poor hero, and held a flask of wine to his lips.

"Drink this, then you will be better. Now can you tell me what has happened?"

"Old man—spear—Liverpool," were the only words of the faint reply she could catch. Then the guard came back with a surgeon, who luckily chanced to be in the train.

"Why, it's Sir Basil Lyndon!" he exclaimed, for he had made the homeward voyage in the *Dolphin*, and become rather intimate with the young Baronet. "Man alive! what has happened? Here, guard, help me to lift him. He can't go on in that state, and I shall stay with him here."

Together they raised poor Basil, and carried him into one of the waiting-rooms, and laid him on the sofa.

"I must know the end of this," said the girl, who had been the means of discovering Basil. "Goody," to the elder lady, "I wish we might stay here, and try to help."

But it ended in her walking off to a quiet part of the platform, where she could sit down and cry alone, while "Goody" went into the waiting-room and offered her services.

"Bless my heart!" said the guard, regretfully. "To think I have been done like this! Why, the old fellow told me this gentleman was a dangerous lunatic, and he was his keeper! He paid handsome for a compartment to himself."

"What became of him?"

"I know no more than you do, sir. He was drinking brandy and water at the buffet in Crewe, for I remember thinking he might as well have offered the poor mad man some."

"He must have been mad himself!" said Dr. Campbell, shortly.

The guard jumped into his box, and the train went off. Mrs. Bolton and Dr. Campbell were left alone with the injured man.

"I can't make it out," the surgeon said, in answer to her questions, when poor Basil had relapsed into unconsciousness. "I came from New York on the same vessel as Lyndon, and a franker, nicer man I never met. He had been away from England more than five years, so I don't see that anyone here can have owed him a grudge. Yet—"

"Then, don't you believe with the guard, that the 'old gentleman' was mad himself? I thought it was a well known fact lunatics thought everyone but themselves insane?"

"This man was no lunatic."

"But how do you know?"

"Because, from the guard's description, it is a fellow I saw when we landed at Liverpool. He looked seventy, judging by his face, but when we had to take his ticket I saw his hand, and I will swear anywhere he was under forty! I remember thinking he must be an actor travelling in his 'get-up.'"

Mrs. Bolton looked bewildered.

"Oughtn't he to be arrested?"

"I expect the police have telegraphed back to Crewe. It was no unpractised hand that did this thing, madam. Why, if the spear had swerved only a quarter of an inch it would have pierced the heart. This looked"—and he pointed to a gold medallion, battered and blood-stained, which hung loosely round Basil's neck—"saved his life!"

"I must be going," said Mrs. Bolton, presently, "for I have a young friend waiting for me, and we want to get on to London this evening. Shall I leave my name and address? As we were the first persons to discover Sir Basil our testimony may be useful. I hope," she added, earnestly, "you do not despair of his recovery?"

Campbell looked anxious.

"It will be a chance," he said, slowly. "He may recover, but he will have a hand-to-hand struggle with death. I shall telegraph to his mother as soon as I have got him to an hotel, and feel able to leave him."

"Then you mean to stay with him?"

"Until I leave him in his own home, and know he is out of danger, or beyond my skill. Poor fellow!" and the doctor's voice grew almost tender. "When I think of how strong and well he looked only three hours ago I should like to strangle that villain with my own hands!"

Someone came in noiselessly, and took Mrs. Bolton's hand.

"Goody, are you ready? Is he better?"

"I am quite ready, dear. Sir Basil is still unconscious, but Dr. Campbell hopes he will do well."

"I hope so, too. Come, Goody!"

They left the waiting-room, and a minute later Basil Lyndon opened his eyes.

"Is this death?" he asked, faintly.

"Please Heaven, no. I am here, old fellow, and I'll see you through," replied Campbell.

But the sick man's mind must have been wandering, for he only answered dreamily,—

"I thought I was in Heaven, and that I heard my wife's voice!"

(To be continued.)

THERE are this year no fewer than forty-five footstool Mayors in England and Wales, and twenty-six of their "worships" were present at the Mansion House at a public meeting to advance the interests of temperance and sobriety, under the auspices of the National Temperance League.

MANY people do not understand the old saying, "in the twinkling of a bedpost," being puzzled to conceive how a bedpost can twinkle. It is not the bedpost that performs the feat at all, but the bedstaff; and the bedstaff was a long staff or stick formerly used in some way to smooth out the clothes of a bed placed in a recess. The maid's deft use of the staff, which, from allusions in various old writers, appears to have been sometimes used as a weapon of offence or defence, gave rise to the saying. When the bedstaff ceased to be used, "bedpost" slipped into the saying, but only to make it incomprehensible.

As far as the fingers are concerned, experts in palmistry divide hands into three classes. Long, slender, tapering fingers determine the first, and denote delicate, trained perceptions. A subject with such fingers has an innate fondness for art, poetry, music, and the higher forms of literature. In the second class the fingers are nearly equal in length, and have blunt ends. They denote a practical, material mind, thorough and reliable, rather than brilliant. A woman with such fingers would make a careful and efficient housekeeper, and a man with similar ones would be cautious and thorough in business. In the third class, the fingers are short, thick and square, and have short, large nails, with cushions on each side of the nails. A subject, having these fingers is active, athletic, opinionated, selfish, has strong appetites for the material things of life, and is liable to form strong prejudices.

## THE BELLE OF THE SEASON.

### CHAPTER LI.—(continued.)

"But was not that your own fault?" said Lady Rosenbury. "Even in your babyhood, Raymond, you showed a nature utterly foreign to that of your parents, and although I endeavoured to act a mother's part towards you, I couldn't love you! There always seemed to be to me an impassable gulf between us which I could never understand!"

Raymond became deathly pale, and almost expected to hear her ladyship express a suspicion of the true cause of the feelings she lamented.

"I couldn't help it if you turned from me then!" he said.

"I suppose not. I think I must have seen in you the nature which you are now betraying, but of which I never suspected the existence. But it is not too late for you to amend, Raymond. It is not too late for you to win my respect and affection, if you wish. I will encourage and assist you to become a better man, to walk in the footsteps of your dear father. Will you try?"

The young man eagerly declared that he would, but with so hypocritical an expression and with such manifest desire to instate himself into her confidence, that Lady Rosenbury could not avoid an insight into his motives.

From that moment she ceased to hope that he would ever change.

"I understand you, Raymond," she said, with involuntary coldness. "I have no confidence in your promised reformation, and we will not linger on the subject. And I will tell you frankly that I have no faith in your statement that Lorraine came only to receive the reward you promised him for a terrible crime. Having failed in it, why should he come at all? And why should he remain so long?"

Raymond was annoyed because her ladyship had read his mind so thoroughly, and because her thoughts still clung to the subject of Lorraine's late visit, but he replied, with assumed lightness,—

"He came to-day, presuming upon his late wife's services to the family, and your affection for Walter, with a most ridiculous request. I could hardly get rid of him!"

"Indeed. What was the request?"

"He wants to live at Rosenbury House, to dine with your ladyship, and to appear in our drawing-room. He said his son was welcomed here, and wherever Walter was a guest he ought to be admitted too!"

Her ladyship expressed great surprise at this announcement, at first being unable to believe it serious, adding,—

"I never heard such a preposterous demand in my life, and, of course, treat it with the ridicule it deserves. But you deceive yourself, Raymond, when you say that he makes it on the grounds you have stated. If he was serious, he made the demand because he has a hold upon you!"

Raymond betrayed confusion, saying,—

"A hold on me!"

"Yes. You hired him to commit a murder, and you are in his power! He presumed upon your connection with him and your mutual guilt, and to avoid conflicts with him you may have given him some sort of promise, which you must break. I cannot have his presence here!"

"But he is Walter's father—"

"That has nothing to do with the question," said her ladyship, firmly. "I can hardly believe that he is Walter's father, but his being so is no reason why I should admit him as a member of my family. If he were my own relative, I could not have him a resident of my house!"

"I have not asked your ladyship to invite him here!" returned Raymond, with his former assumed pleasantness of manner. "I simply mentioned his demand as an illustration of his impudence. Of course, I could not

allow my mother to sit at the same table with her former servant. I know he would never have asked it, but for the well known fact of his son's being received by you as an honoured guest!"

"Don't call Walter 'his son'! Lorraine forfeited the name of father when he bargained with you for the extinction of Walter's life! Throughout Walter's life he has seemed rather in awe of him than otherwise, and never bestowed upon him fatherly caresses. But I did not summon you hither to discuss Lorraine. I wrote to Lady Geraldine Summers this morning, expressing surprise that she has not been here to see me lately. She sent me a reply a short time since, stating that she remains away on your account, you having made her another offer of marriage, to which you will not accept her refusal."

"That is true enough," said Rosenbury, quite at his ease, now that his relations with Lorraine were no longer under discussion. "Her uncle assured me that he will use his influence on my behalf, and that she may be induced to accept me ultimately."

"Her uncle little realises the depth of Lady Geraldine's character!" said Lady Rosenbury, warmly. "She has given her heart to Walter, as you know, and she will in due time give him her hand. I desire you to cease to annoy her in any way; I will not have you make her visits to me dreaded by her on account of your persecutions. If you persist in your suit—unwelcome as it is—I shall oblige you to leave my house and take up your quarters elsewhere."

"If I could only be got away, you and Geraldine and Walter would have charming reunions I don't doubt!" sneered Raymond. "To speak plainly, I must say you are a discreet friend to persuade a young girl to disobey her lawful guardian. She would have married me long ago had it not been for you."

"I have acted towards Geraldine as though she were my own child," responded Lady Rosenbury, sadly. "Her uncle is not a proper guardian for her, and I have done right in tacitly encouraging her to rebel against an enforced and unloving marriage. She and Walter were born for each other, and they will doubtless unite their lives. I would advise you to look elsewhere—"

"You advise in vain. I will not give up the Lady Geraldine while I live."

Lady Rosenbury saw that it was useless to argue the matter and relinquished it, resolving to think it over in her solitude.

"I have something else to say to you!" she said, after a pause. "I have once or twice made some allusions to you about my intentions to will my property to Walter, that no one may ever say he was a fortune-hunter in wooing Lady Geraldine. You have large wealth in the entailed estates, Raymond, and will not miss my fortune. I intend to declare him publicly as my heir."

"Perhaps that is the reason he pretends to be so fond of you!" sneered Raymond. "He's played his cards well, and I dare say laughs in his sleeve at his success. Do you contemplate dying soon, or shall you go into a convent?"

Lady Rosenbury was deeply hurt at this unfeeling speech, but she evinced her emotion only by a sigh and the fading of the colour of her cheek. Her tone was as gentle as usual as she replied,—

"I hope to live many years, Raymond, and to enjoy my fortune while I live. I wish merely to make provision against the change that is inevitable. I propose to make Walter quite independent of Geraldine before their marriage, thus carrying a little further my dear husband's kindness to him. In short, Raymond, I expect my attorney here immediately to discuss the necessary business."

As she concluded she glanced at the clock upon the mantel-shelf.

Raymond had always looked upon the proposed will in Walter's favour as something far in the future, which a thousand contingencies might occur to prevent, and his anger was great on finding that her ladyship

intended, without further delay, not only to make a will in favour of Walter, but to settle an immediate income upon him in addition.

"Walter cares more for money than he pretends, he said, angrily. "He has worked upon your sympathies, inducing you to disinherit your own son on his account. I only wish my plans hadn't miscarried lately!"

"You mistake. Walter does not know my intentions in regard to him," said Lady Rosenbury, quietly.

Raymond was so excessively enraged that he expressed doubts of her ladyship's word, declaring that he knew that the artist had taken every opportunity to malign him, and threatening to be even with him yet.

As her ladyship grew indignant, he changed his tone, pleading with abject entreaty for the fortune she proposed leaving at her death to Walter, but Lady Rosenbury rebuking his childish selfishness, he became angry again, and exclaimed, threateningly,—

"And so you persist in disinheriting your own son in favour of a low-born painter?"

"You are no longer my son!" said Lady Rosenbury, spiritedly. "My conversation with you this afternoon has given me an insight into your character, which I find to be utterly cowardly, selfish, and weak. Unworthy son of a noble father, I know not whence you derive your ignoble nature. I do know that if my dear husband were alive and knew you for what you are—a murderer at heart, a traitor of the absent, a creature to whom falsehoods and false dealing seem second nature—he would scorn and disown you as I now do! Go sir, and do not enter my presence again."

She arose and pointed to the door. Raymond also arose, but, instead of obeying, advanced menacingly towards her.

At this juncture the door very opportunely opened, and the attorney was ushered into the room, according to her ladyship's orders, previously given.

At sight of him Rosenbury turned without a word, and withdrew, placing himself, however, at the door in a convenient position to listen to the conversation between Lady Rosenbury and her business-agent.

"I received your note, my lady," said the attorney "and have brought the papers necessary, for the business before us!"

As he spoke he took from his pocket a small packet of papers tied with coloured tape, and her ladyship indicated to him a seat before her writing desk—a tall, inlaid structure at one side of the room.

"You know in whose favour the will is to be made?" inquired her ladyship.

"Yes, my lady. You stated that Mr. Walter Lorraine, the distinguished young artist, is to be your heir. Have you quite decided, my lady, to leave everything to him, ignoring your noble son?"

"Lord Rosenbury has sufficient property without mine," returned her ladyship, quietly. "You understand also that I want a deed executed, giving Mr. Lorraine fifteen hundred pounds per annum from this time forward."

"I do, my lady," said the attorney, taking up a pen. "That will make up the munificent sum of two thousand pounds a year, counting his late lordship's bequest. Mr. Lorraine must be a very deserving young gentleman to have received the late Lord Rosenbury's generous remembrance and your ladyship's kind forethought."

Lady Rosenbury bowed, taking a seat beside the attorney, to whom she indicated, on looking over the papers, the alterations she desired made. The attorney ventured again to ask her if she had fully considered the very singular step she was about to take in alienating so handsome a fortune from her family, adding that if Lord Rosenbury's fortune was very large, it might be well to look forward to the time when he would have children.

Her ladyship replied briefly that she had quite decided, and the attorney then read the documents for her approbation.

"Quite right!" she commented, when he had finished. "I suppose witnesses are neces-

sary to attest my signature. My housekeeper and butler—old family servants—will do as witnesses, will they not?"

The attorney assenting, her ladyship touched her bell-pull, and Rosenbury stepped into another apartment off the corridor, remaining there while the necessary witnesses were summoned.

He then returned to the vicinity of the door.

He heard Lady Rosenbury make some explanation to the servants, and, after signing her own name, request their attesting signatures.

"It is quite finished," muttered the baffled and disappointed young man as he returned to the adjacent apartment for temporary concealment. "In that document I lose a handsome addition to my fortune! I have been a fool! I ought to have flattered her ladyship, paid respect to her wishes, and pretended to be what I am not! I owe it to Walter Lorraine—curse him!"

When the servants had departed from the boudoir Raymond again ventured to listen, and heard the attorney say,—

"The documents are quite right now, my lady. What do you wish done with them?"

"Oh, I will keep them in my desk," said her ladyship. "They will be quite safe there for a few days, and I wish to show the deed to Mr. Walter Lorraine."

After some further remarks the attorney prepared to take his leave, and Raymond hastened to his own apartments, his heart overflowing with bitter and malicious thoughts.

"That will will never amount to much," he said harshly to himself. "Walter Lorraine will not live long. I am persuaded. If my hate could kill, he would have died long since! Lorraine must put him out of the way, and then die himself! Or, if he refuses to do ought to further my plans, and persists in his ruinous demands, he must die to-morrow night! I cannot go back in the course I have entered, and will sacrifice without scruple all who stand in my way!"

The dangerous light in his pale coloured eyes and the unwonted compression of his lips attested his terrible purposes and the unrelenting will to execute them.

"I feel," he continued, "that I am standing on a precipice where one step may hurl me to ruin! I'm getting rid of Walter, I may be obliged also to—to quiet Lady Rosenbury, and prevent her denouncing me as his murderer. With those three—her ladyship, Walter, and Lorraine—dead, I should be truly happy. And I should then be sure to win Geraldine!"

## CHAPTER LII.

Then live; what need I fear of thee?  
But yet I'll make assurance doubly sure;  
And take a bond of fate; thou shalt not live;  
That I may tell pale-hearted fear, it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder.

—Shakespeare.

THE day after the execution of the deed and will in behalf of Walter Lorraine Lady Rosenbury went out in her carriage for the purpose of making a few preparations for the Countess of Montford's ball, which was to come off on the evening of the morrow. Raymond had kept himself informed of her ladyship's movements, and after her departure proceeded to her boudoir, where he looked himself in.

His intention was fully explained when he proceeded to the writing-desk, unlocked it with a duplicate key which he had found some weeks before, after it had been lost by her ladyship, and proceeded to look over the papers it contained.

He was searching for a newly made will.

After a brief search he found it, but the deed that had been executed at the same time was gone, and he muttered,—

"Her ladyship has taken the deed with her. Perhaps she is going to Walter's studio to give it to him. That is the truth, I don't doubt!"

He glanced over the document, his lip curling as he read the allusion "to my dearly-loved Walter," and he then deliberately lighted the gas, and burned this will!

"There!" he exclaimed, in a tone of satisfaction, when the ashes of the paper fell to the floor. "I have taken the first step! Before Lady Rosenbury misses that paper, Walter and Lorraine will both be where they will never trouble me! And then, if she is likely to prove troublesome, her ladyship must follow them. The lawyer will conclude, when he finds that the will has disappeared, that Lady Rosenbury repented of her injustice to me, or burned it on learning of Walter's death!"

With a smile, he picked up the ashes of the document, restored the desk to order, looking it, and then returned to his own apartments, where he attired himself to visit Lorraine at the sloop.

He selected a dark morning dress, and put on a travelling cap, with a view to disguising himself as much as possible, without making his object apparent, and he then left his rooms. In the corridor he encountered his valet Took, who expressed some surprise at his master's singular costume, Rosenbury usually being very fastidious about dress, but, with an expression of impatience, Raymond passed him, and quitted the house.

In an adjacent street he entered a cab, and drove to the point indicated by Lorraine, there alighting. As he looked about him in momentary uncertainty, seeing before him the river, a seaman, no other than Jack Marlow, stepped up to him, saying,—

"Are you the gentleman for the *Morsful Petrel*, sir?"

Raymond replied in the affirmative.

"Then you are to come with me, sir," returned Jack, his eyes roving about everywhere, yet seldom resting upon Rosenbury. "The boat is here, sir!"

Raymond followed him to the boat, and was rowed out to the sloop, upon the deck of which Lorraine was standing, awaiting his visitor. He assisted Rosenbury to the deck, and then addressing his employer, said,—

"You can go ashore, Jack, and open everything. Leave the little boat alongside, so that my friend can go ashore when he likes. Get one of them fellows in that barge you'll take you ashore and fetch you back ten o'clock!"

Jack obeyed, signalling a barge near at hand, the proprietor of which kindly agreed to set him ashore in consideration of a trifling recompense thrown into his vessel by Lorraine, and the seaman was soon transported to land.

"Now, come cabin, Raymond," said the owner of the sloop. "Tain't dark, as you see, though it 'll come on dusky in course hour or less."

Raymond obeyed, following his father to the little cabin, which was already lighted by a little lamp.

The room remained unaltered since its occupation by Walter, except upon the table there was now a miscellaneous assortment of bottles, many of them empty, but more well filled.

"Sit down, m' son," said Lorraine, hospitably. "This room has thousand's recollections of historical interest. In that lower berth Walter lay many hours like dead man, and to that beam over your head your poor father despit father tried to hang himself! Likewise, it's seen sunthin' the bright side life. Jack and me—Jack's the fellow that rowed you 'board—have had gay times 'thin these walls. We've sung, told stories that'd tear the hair off'n your head, and drunk more bottles good wine 'n you could count. Have sunthin'?"

He moved towards the table, but Raymond declined the proffered refreshment, and Lorraine continued,—

"Fish is life. Mean the dark side and bright side. But Walter forgave me, bless his noble heart! Jes' like him!"

As the owner of the sloop showed signs of giving way to morbid grief, Raymond abruptly bade him show more sense, as he

wished to converse on very important subjects with him.

Lorraine instantly became quiet and grave—preternaturally so—and awaited the remarks of his son. He was obliged to wait some minutes, and then Raymond remarked,—

"Have you given any further thought to my proposal of yesterday?"

"You 'er to—"

"To removing Walter!" was the response.

"It is not necessary for me to repeat my arguments in favour of such a course. You know that he stands in your way as well mine!"

"Let him stan' there then!" exclaimed Lorraine determinedly. "Raymond, your heart is wuss 'n a nether mill-stun! You ought to be 'shamed yourself!"

"You're a proper person to rebuke me, I should say!" returned Raymond, angrily. "You broke your wife's heart, committed bigamy, and—"

"We won't bring these old things up, Raymond," interrupted Lorraine, soberly. "They've nothing to do with you! The worst thing ever did was to put you into Walter's place. If 't wasn't for consequences, 'd be tempted to confess truth to-morrow!"

"But you know very well that if you should do such a thing, you would be transported for life! The only way open to you is to keep silent, and make my path all straight!"

"I s'pose that's so!"

"It is!" declared Raymond anxiously. "You have some affection for your own son, haven't you?"

"Not much!" frankly replied Lorraine.

"You see, Raymond, your the image of your mother, an' she was always scoldin' and takin' on 'bout Walter, so what with her and m' own conscience, I had hard time of it, and was glad clear out. Can't 'spect, under those circumstances, to have me dote on you!"

"Like Lady Rosenbury, then," said Raymond, bitterly. "You love Walter better than me?"

"You've hit nail on head, m' son," replied the owner of the sloop. "Do think more Walter 'n you! But that needn't make trouble 'tween you 'n me. We'll get on together famously."

"But father," said Raymond, using the title that belonged to Lorraine, when addressed by him, with the hope of making some impression upon his heart, "you can see that my happiness is dependent upon Walter's removal, and, not my happiness alone, but our mutual safety!"

"No such thing. Safe 'n long as you've got money. As to happiness, if man can't be happy with fortune like yours, and houses, and horses, and real ladyship to call mother, let him be unhappy. Who cares? Look at Walter. He's happy or little 'nuty, paints few pictures no 'count—not worth shillin' the lot—wears good clothes, got girl love him, and he's happy! He's got no house, no dimun' shirt-bosoms, no big ring on finger, no horses, no wise vanities, nothing 't all but little canvas, few cheap paints, and girl to love. He has fought for her with you and uncle more 'n all women worth, but he keeps happy. Tain't in the number things you got, but the spirit you 'ceive 'em in!"

The philosopher put on his hat, tipping it back, and looked at his son with a benevolent expression on his ruddy countenance. As the latter continued silent he resumed,—

"Take my 'vice, Raymond, and be contented. Everything 'd been all right if you'd only let things 'lone. Can see where you've made all mistakes, but tain't too late rectify 'em!"

"But Lady Rosenbury made a will to-day leaving at her death her fortune to Walter!"

"Well, he 'serves whatever she's mind give him. You make great mistake in wanting all yourself. Why not be willing give Walter something, while all ought belong to him?"

Raymond replied that he could not see so large a fortune slip from him without regret adding,—

"His habits are simple and he has plenty of money for all his wants, so that that sum would be useless to him. I have always looked for-

ward to have it to myself, and I am determined not to lose it!"

"How can you keep it or get it?"

Raymond hesitated a moment, and then replied,—

"I don't mind telling you what I did before coming here, since you will never betray me. I got the will out of her ladyship's desk, and burned it—"

Lorraine uttered a cry of astonishment.

"And so, if Lady Rosenbury should die, I should inherit the property she meant to leave to Walter!"

"But when she finds out the will's missing, ladyship 'll suspect you took it!"

"She may never find out that it is missing," replied Raymond, with a dark look on his face.

Lorraine stared hard at his son, finding it difficult to comprehend the meaning of his words, and he then moved his seat further from that of his visitor, exclaiming,—

"I wouldn't b'lieved you'd ever come to talking of murders jist as you'd speak of your dinner! You're bad man, Raymond—a very bad man!"

"I am obliged to do things I wouldn't do if I hadn't this cursed secret weighing upon me. I was good enough until your wife told it to me on her deathbed, but since then everything has gone wrong. I don't consider myself bad because I endeavour to defend myself and secure my position. As a choice between two evils, I shall be taking the least in removing any dangerous persons, and I shall not hesitate to do so!"

Lorraine regarded his son as though he were a monster, with an abhorrent expression, and moved still further away.

Erring as he had been, the ex-gardener could not bear unmoved the cool wickedness of his son, nor contemplate with a shudder the crimes meditated by him. The thought flashed upon him that he might himself fall a victim to Raymond's apparent thirst for blood, but he endeavoured to dismiss so appalling an idea, and said,—

"You've had my answer, once for all time, and needn't say thing more me about it. I want hear what you got say about my coming live Roseby House."

"Haven't my arguments made any impression upon you?" demanded Raymond. "Do you persist in wishing to force your company upon her ladyship?"

"I do!"

"Then let me tell you that she utterly refuses to receive you. Of course I couldn't tell her our relationship, and she expressed great surprise at your presumption, treating it with ridicule!"

Lorraine did not seemed troubled at this blow to his hopes, but answered,—

"You mus' manage it, Raymond. If she continues to refuse, you mus' set up separate establishment for you'n me. After all I've done for you, I ain't going be cheated, as you want cheat me, out my reward!"

To this determination he obstinately adhered, and heard without emotion the pleadings of his unhappy son to forego his claims at least for a few weeks more. He did not see why one in the position of Raymond could not do as he pleased, and defy the comments of the world, and he attributed his son's reluctance to receive him as an honoured guest to his remarkable selfishness, which was exhibited in every action.

Finding his pleadings of no avail, Raymond became angry, and threatened his father loudly, but Lorraine did not yield, and his son then arose, saying, angrily,—

"There's no use in my staying here longer. You will not listen to reason, but are determined to ruin me by forcing yourself upon me. I assure you you will not succeed in your designs. I am willing to give you all the money you want, but I won't have you at Rosenbury House!"

He turned and left the cabin, followed by his father, thinking to conquer Lorraine by his

own determined refusal, but he did not yet know him thoroughly.

He paused upon the deck, near its side, and his father asked him,—

"You've made your last decision, Raymond? There ain't no danger of you changing your mind?"

"None whatever!"

As he replied, Raymond made a feint of getting over the side into the boat, thinking this movement would bring his father to terms, but, to his surprise, Lorraine kept at his heels.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean I'm going home with you," was the firm response. "You can't put me off longer, Raymond. I'm going sleep Roseby House to-night!"

Raymond turned upon Lorraine, his breast full of murderous thoughts, and then he looked around him.

The evening had just fallen, and though it was not very dark a deep shadow seemed to rest upon the river, so that it was impossible to see far beyond the length of the sloop.

There was no noise upon the waters, but further down the stream lights gleamed from the cabin-windows of vessels, and the town-lights illuminated each side of the dark and silent river.

"Can't you swim?" he asked, abruptly.

"No. What want swim for?"

"Do you persist in accompanying me home?"

"I do!"

Raymond regarded his father with a look of terrible resolution, and the latter began to take the alarm from his singular questions and manner. Before he could utter a cry, however, if such had been his intention, Raymond struck him a blow that sent him reeling over the side of the boat into the river.

There was a splash and a muffled shriek, and then all was silent.

Raymond gave a hurried glance over the scene, to assure himself that he had not been observed, and he then hastened into the little boat and rowed quickly ashore.

On landing he cast one look backward, and then sped away from the river, his senses pervaded by a feeling of horror and dread at his crime.

"A murderer!" he said, in a hollow whisper as he hastened onward. "How everyone seems to look at me, as if they knew what I had done! Can my guilt be written in my face?"

He pressed his hand nervously over his features, and then slackened his speed, becoming more calm as he realised that his singular manner could not fail to attract notice.

When he had arrived at some distance from the scene of his crime, he signalled a cab and drove to the vicinity of his residence.

The drive seemed a long one, and his guilty fears caused him to look continually from the windows to see if he were pursued, but these gave way when he alighted from the cab and made his way unmolested to his home.

"He brought his fate on himself," he muttered, "and I am not to blame. He had no business to drive me to desperation! I suppose at this moment he's lying white and cold at the bottom of the river!"

He shuddered at the picture presented by his imagination, and then entered the mansion, with the aid of his latch-key, proceeding directly to his own rooms.

In his present state of mind he could not bear the presence or aid of Tooke at his toilet, and he looked the door, and proceeded to attire himself. His first act was to throw his travelling-cup and morning coat into a closet and put the key into his pocket, with an apprehension that some one might have noticed his garments at he went out to the sloop. He then attired himself in evening-dress, perfumed his hair and person, completely changing his appearance in a very short time.

This occupation served to allay his intense excitement, and when he had finished, he muttered, quite calmly,—

"That sailor will think that Lorraine went

ashore with his guest, and won't suspect the truth. If the body is ever found it will be thought he fell overboard when under the influence of liquor. In any case, I am safe. I took good care that the sailor should not have a good look at my face, and I have nothing to fear."

He glanced at his white jewelled hands as if to see if there were any stain upon them, although he knew there could not be, and then he paced the floor as he resumed,—

"Yes, I am glad now I did it; he was not quite sober, and drowned immediately, of course. I have nothing more to apprehend from him. I think it probable that his coming here to live might not have betrayed the secret of my birth, but it would have awakened suspicion, at least. At any rate, I have made all things sure by getting rid of him."

A look of satisfaction chased the gloom from his face, and his tone was quite gleeful, as he said,—

"At last the secret of my birth is safe! No one in the whole world knows it but me. Not a human being suspects that I am not the rightful heir to the Rosenbury estates, and the lawful bearer of the family title. Safe! Safe at last!"

Even as he spoke a swift and sudden pall seemed to veil his guilty soul, like the warning of coming retribution; but it passed as quickly as it came, and he shook off its effects, muttering that it was because he was new to the business.

"One of the three has been swept from my path," he resumed, "and my agency in his disappearance will never be suspected. There are two more to follow—Walter and Lady Rosenbury—and then I shall be perfectly happy. Then Lady Geraldine will be mine!"

At this juncture there came a tap upon the door.

Raymond recognised it as the peculiar knock of his valet, and went to the door, unlooking it with some mental agitation.

"If you please, my lord," said Tooke, obsequiously, "Lady Rosenbury desires your presence in her boudoir. Her ladyship would be happy to see you immediately."

Raymond's pale cheeks became still paler, as he remembered that her ladyship had told him on the previous day that she did not wish him to enter her presence again; and, with ill-concealed trepidation, fearing only, however, that he was to be called to account for the missing will, he obeyed the summons, proceeding to Lady Rosenbury's boudoir.

## CHAPTER LIII.

Joy never feasts so high,  
As when the first course is of Mischery.  
—Mickling.

A springing joy  
A pleasure which no language can express,  
An ecstasy, that mother's only fool  
Plays round my heart!

A. Phillips.

ABOUT the same time that Raymond set out to visit Lorraine in his sloop Walter was in his studio, reclining idly upon a lounge, with a thoughtful look on his handsome face. His easel, paints, and brushes were stored away in an adjoining closet, he having left them untouched for several days. He had been too much excited of late to begin a new picture, and had occupied himself chiefly with thoughts of Geraldine, of Lady Rosenbury, and of his mysterious late guest. He had received the second letter sent him by the latter, but, as it afforded no clue to the whereabouts of the fugitive, it did not greatly relieve his anxieties in regard to him. He knew, however, that he had not yet been captured by his enemies, from the fact that Dr. Mure's spy continued to linger about the street, watching all who entered or left the house occupied by Walter.

At the moment we look in upon him, the artist was holding in his hands a Court paper, in which he had just read the announcement

of the forthcoming ball at the Countess of Montford's. The paper stated that the attendance would be unusually large, in honour of the lovely bride of the Earl, who, as was generally known, was the last member of a noble and once powerful Italian family. There was some allusion to the Earl's beautiful niece, the belle of the season, and Walter smiled as he read it, thinking,—

"All these social honours are of little account to Geraldine now! She cares more for being the guiding star, the genial sun, of one happy home, than for all the plaudits of the gay world! She does not feel it hard to give up her titled admirers for an obscure and low-born man as I am! My noble darling!"

A happy smile curved his lips and he gave himself up to a pleasant reverie, of which Lady Geraldine's noble qualities formed the subject.

His thoughts were at length broken in upon by his valet, who entered, saying,—

"If you please, sir, there's a box come, sir, for you."

"Very well, Parkin," responded Walter. "I expected it. Let the man who brought it assist you in bringing it in here."

Parkin bowed and withdrew, soon returning with the man who brought the box; and that article, a good-sized wooden affair, was deposited near the centre of the studio, and the two men then withdrew.

After a few minutes' absence the valet returned to open the box, which operation was speedily performed, and Walter was again left alone.

The artist then arose and glanced over the content with an air of melancholy interest, it being filled with books and pictures that had once adorned Mrs. Lorraine's cottage.

Knowing the nature of Lorraine, Walter had foreseen a possibility of his claiming the effects of his late wife, to sacrifice them for money to gratify his ruling passion, and he had resolved to save his supposed mother's books and pictures, most of which had been presents to her from himself. Soon after his involuntary voyage in the *Remorseful Petrel*, Walter had written to Mrs. Williams, informing her that Colse Lorraine was alive and in London; that he might soon claim the possessions of the late Mrs. Lorraine, which must all be given up to him, with the exception of a few articles given to Martha Williams, and the books and pictures. These latter he requested to have neatly packed and sent him, and they had just arrived, in pursuance of his orders.

The pictures were placed in a compartment of the box by themselves, and these Walter took out, looking upon them with much interest, many of them having been his earliest efforts.

He was still regarding them, not having yet touched the books, when Lady Rosenbury entered the studio, as he advanced to meet her with a joyful exclamation.

"Dear Lady Rosenbury," he said, placing a chair for her accommodation, "what an unexpected pleasure to see you here!"

"You don't deserve it at all, my dear boy," returned her ladyship, with a smile. "It seems an age since you came to see me. You and Geraldine have neglected me strangely of late!"

Walter raised her ladyship's hand to his lips, replying,—

"I intended visiting Rosenbury House this evening. But your ladyship is not looking well. In truth, dear Lady Rosenbury, you are very pale!"

"I am only sick at heart, my dear Walter," replied her ladyship, sadly. "You know that I am not free from troubles, and sometimes they seem greater than I can bear!"

Walter expressed his sympathy in delicate terms, adding,—

"Can I not assist your ladyship in bearing your grief, or conquering it? If you would confide in me, the trouble might look less!"

"It is about Raymond I know of his late designs upon your life, Walter, and the knowledge weighs me to the earth!"

Walter started, his fears that her ladyship had overheard his conversation with Raymond in the boudoir being verified, and he pressed her ladyship's hand in silent sympathy, not knowing what to say to comfort her in her disappointment in her son.

"It is not because I love Raymond," said her ladyship, after a pause. "It is impossible to love a nature like his! I think nature made a mistake in giving me a mother's instincts, for instead of going out to Raymond, they settle upon you, Walter. Oh, Walter, if you were only my son instead of Raymond! I said it was not because I love Raymond that I am so deeply grieved at his conduct. It is because my dear husband's son should be so unworthy of him, because the last of the Rosenburys should be a blot and disgrace upon his line and name, because of the evil he will do in the world with his unchecked passions, cowardly heart, and unscrupulous will. Oh, would that I had been childless rather than the mother of Raymond!"

"Would that I had been your son!" said Walter, moved to tears by her ladyship's wild burst of grief.

Lady Rosenbury reiterated the wish, adding,—

"I talked with Raymond yesterday, begging him to follow in his father's steps, but I discovered that he had inherited nothing of the nature of my dear husband. It may seem harsh and unmotherly to say it, but he is utterly worthless! There is very little good in him! I have disowned him, Walter. He is no longer my son!"

Walter felt that whatever course might be taken by her ladyship could not fail to be merciful as well as just, and he therefore made no reply.

Lady Rosenbury soon continued,—

"You are aware, Walter, that I possess in my own right and at my absolute disposal a large fortune. For many years I have had the intention of bequeathing it to a person outside my own family, and yesterday I made a will to that effect. I informed Raymond of the step I proposed taking, before the arrival of my attorney, and he was very violent in his anger!"

"But he is wealthy enough without your fortune, dear Lady Rosenbury," said Walter.

"Certainly. But I think he is quite as angry at my chosen heir as at the loss of my fortune," said her ladyship, adding, with a smile, "but you express no curiosity to know to whom I intend to bequeathing my property. Guess who it is to be my heir!"

"I hope, whoever it is, he or she will be obliged to wait many years," responded the artist, affectionally. "Your ladyship has probably very kindly bequeathed your fortune to some charitable institution!"

"By no means. I have willed it to my adopted son, Walter Lorraine!"

The artist was most unaffectedly astonished at this revelation, and her ladyship enjoyed his emotion.

"To me?" he said, with tears, and a trembling voice. "I am to be your ladyship's heir?"

"Yes, my dear Walter," answered Lady Rosenbury.

"I appreciate your great and generous kindness, dear Lady Rosenbury," said Walter, earnestly, "but pardon me for saying that I ought to decline it. I beg you to leave it to Lord Rosenbury!"

"Never!"

"But he may change in time. With years he may gain wisdom. I fear, your ladyship, that I have come between you and Raymond, and I beg you to relieve me of the crushing sense of obligation which I shall endure in being your heir. With the generous bequest of the late Lord Rosenbury, and what I gain by the sale of my pictures, I am really rich for one of my quiet habits!"

"True, true my dear boy, but I look forward to the time when, as the husband of Lady Geraldine Summers, and yourself a distinguished artist, your hospitality will be large and your

expenditures heavy. Your children must not be portionless. No, Walter, I will not listen to any more objections! My husband loved you as if you had been his own son, and, were he alive, would approve my course in making you my heir. Not another word!"

She placed her finger with playful earnestness on Walter's lips, and he kissed her hand in silent gratitude for the proof she had given of her love, although it was repugnant to his feelings to accept it.

Resuming the subject, the artist pleaded in behalf of Raymond, with a rare generosity that touched her ladyship, and confirmed her intentions, but he ceased when she said, resolutely,—

"No, Walter, do not say another word in favour of Raymond! Did you say anything else, I could hardly refuse you, but in this case I must be my own judge. It would be very different if he were dependent upon me, but you only ask me to swell his already full coffers! It could not make him better or really happier. It being settled, therefore, that in the course of time you are to be my heir and use wisely the fortune that will be yours, we will talk of something else. Lorraine called upon Raymond yesterday, and had a long interview with him!"

Walter expressed his surprise, remarking that he had advised Lorraine not to see Raymond again, and received a promise to that effect.

"Raymond said that Lorraine made a demand to be admitted as a member into my family," said her ladyship, "but such a demand seems preposterous! If he were in earnest, he presumed upon the hold he has acquired over Raymond!"

"I will see my father," answered Walter, blushing at the relationship he thus acknowledged, "and see that he ceases to annoy your ladyship, and breaks off all connection with Lord Rosenbury!"

"I am inclined to think, Walter, that Raymond tried to persuade Lorraine to repeat his attempt upon your life. I spoke to him stating my suspicions, and his confusion convinced me of their truth. You must be on your guard against Lorraine, who may repeat his late treachery to you in some other form. Do not forget my injunction!"

"I will not, Lady Rosenbury. How strange it seems," he said bitterly, "that my father should have conspired against the life of his own son! I cannot understand it!"

"It is equally a mystery to me, Walter. I suppose it can only be explained on the ground that Lorraine has no natural affections, no heart! I am surprised that Raymond should have dared broach such a subject to your father!"

Walter sighed, and after a brief silence asked,—

"Is your ladyship going to the Earl's ball to-morrow evening?"

"Yes, on the Lady Geraldine's account. I have not seen her lately, and am a little anxious about her."

"She meets me with little love or sympathy, I think, from her relatives. Shall you go?"

"I am not invited. The Earl, you may remember ended my acquaintance with himself at Rook Land, a few weeks since!"

"I remember that you told me what he said on finding you and Geraldine together on the shore. I will tell Geraldine that you are well."

"Thank you, dear Lady Rosenbury. I will write a note to her to-morrow, under cover to you, if your ladyship will kindly forward it. I fear writing too often, lest the Earl should suspect our correspondence and break it off. I wish to relate some singular events that have happened recently, and gain an explanation from Lady Geraldine."

"What singular events?"

Walter replied by relating what he had once before partially told her ladyship, how he had found on the sands by the sea, near Barleyford, during his voyage on Lorraine's sloop, the fugitive who afterwards became his guest.

He mentioned that he had met him before at Rook Land, and recognised his features on finding him ill with fever. He told how he had brought him to his home, how he had told Geraldine about him, dwelling on the mystery enveloping his guest, and how the maiden had sent him, skilfully disguised, the persecutor and late gaoler of the fugitive to be his nurse. The succeeding events were then narrated, and Walter added,—

"I am quite unable to conceive how this Dr. Mure could have been recommended me as a Mr. Bowen by the Lady Geraldine. She must have been skilfully imposed upon by him; but how could he know who was my guest, that I had a guest at all, or that I had spoken of him to Lady Geraldine?"

"It looks singular, Walter, and, as you say, it is probable that Geraldine has been imposed upon. She is very generous to the poor, and in some benevolent visit may have encountered this Dr. Mure. I will ask her to-morrow evening, and you shall come next day to Rosenbury House to hear her reply!"

Walter accepted the invitation, and her ladyship then drew from her pocket the deed she had had executed, giving Walter a handsome income, and placed it in his hands.

"You must not open it till I am gone home," she said, with a smile. "Put it in your pocket, my dear boy. That is right," she added, as Walter wonderingly obeyed her. "You can read it after my departure. What have you been painting lately?"

"Nothing," was the response. "I have not felt like work lately, living in such an atmosphere of excitement. I have thought a great deal of Geraldine's unpleasant social relations, and my longing has been great to take her from that atmosphere of coldness to a pleasant, loving home! It seems terrible to think of waiting two long dreary years before I can claim her, but I could bear it better if her life could be all bright and happy in the meantime!"

"Wait a little longer, Walter," said her ladyship, encouragingly. "Geraldine is brave and true-hearted, and will not allow herself to be made miserable without great cause. And when sufficient cause occurs, we can discuss the best way to overcome it. And if absolutely necessary for her protection, you know, you and Geraldine can contract a marriage in Scotland at any time, with my sanction and presence at the ceremony. But I advise you to be patient. Something may yet occur to favour you!"

"Your ladyship is a good comforter," returned Walter, gratefully. "I know that you see our dear Geraldine often, and observe if she is happy. Another cause of my recent excitement has been the disappearance of my late guest, who must be wandering about London somewhere, with very little money in his possession, as I conclude he has not yet proffered his claims to his property."

"And all this excitement has kept you from painting, of course. How have you employed your time since I saw you last?"

"In thinking and reading, or attempting to read. As your ladyship entered I was about looking over a box of books and pictures sent me by Mrs. Williams, to whom I had written for them, fearing that my father might sell them. The pictures are among the first I painted, even before going to Italy!"

"Indeed! I should like to look at them, Walter," said Lady Rosenbury, with affectionate interest in her protégé. "I have the first picture you ever painted, you know, and I ought to have a second to match it!"

She arose and approached the open box, and Walter hastened to exhibit the pictures to her.

"It is singular that such pictures should be the production of a mere boy, as you were when you painted them—a self-taught boy!" remarked her ladyship, contemplating them earnestly. "Not that they are finished in style, my dear Walter, for they are not, but the conception of each is original, the treatment of the subject bold and striking, and the

general effect excellent. They are well-calculated to impress one with the genius of their author, and his future capabilities. You have made vast improvement since painting those crude pictures."

Walter thanked her ladyship warmly for her unstinted praise, and, as she turned away, Lady Rosenbury's gaze fell upon a large square Bible that lay at the top of the box.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "that is one of the gifts I made your mother on her wedding day, Walter! It looks quite fresh, does it not?"

She sat down beside the box, and lifted the heavy book to her knee, noticing how unstained was the rich brown morocco binding, and how bright the gilt clasps.

"My mother was always very careful of that Bible," said Walter. "She always kept it covered, and generally locked in her box besides, that it might not be injured. I particularly want to keep it, as Mrs. Williams told me that an hour or two before her death my mother called for me, begged to see you, and then asked for this Bible, requesting to be left alone. When Mrs. Williams returned, she seemed to have acquired some comfort from its pages, although she persisted in calling frantically for yourself, Lord Rosenbury and me! She afterwards enjoined Mrs. Williams to give it to me!"

"I wish I could have been with her in her last moments," responded her ladyship. "I have always felt anxious and dissatisfied when remembering how earnest she called for me!"

She opened the book, and showed Walter the inscription in her own handwriting upon the fly-leaf.

She then turned over the leaves, coming to those left between the Testaments for family records.

"Here is the notice of the marriage of your parents," she said, indicating it to Walter. "We will look at the record of your birth!"

She turned another leaf or two, and exclaimed,—

"What a singular way of mentioning your birth, my dear Walter! It is your mother's handwriting, and simply says that a son was born to herself and husband at such a date. It does not give your name!"

"I have noticed the singularity before," replied the artist, "and I spoke of it once to my mother, but she seemed annoyed and frightened because I had observed it, and immediately put the book away."

"How strange! But there is writing in pencil on the other side of the leaf. Perhaps that will explain it."

Reversing the leaf, Lady Rosenbury glanced at the handwriting, remarking that it was that of Mrs. Lorraine, and the next moment she said,—

"It is something she wrote to you and me when she was dying. Look over the book with me, Walter, and we will read it together!"

Walter obeyed.

The writing was a hastily-written but characteristic scrawl, in pencil, and showed signs of physical weakness and great excitement.

It was to the following effect,—

"To Lady Rosenbury, Walter, Raymond! I am dying. I fear death will come before any of you can reach me. I cannot die with my terrible life-secret on my soul. Forgive me. I have been so wicked. It was not my fault. Celia made me do it. Walter is not my son, and Raymond is not Lord Rosenbury. I changed the children when they were babies. Oh, forgive, forgive me! Justice must be done. Raymond, pardon your poor weak mother. Oh, I have suffered so all my life for my wicked deed. I swear with my dying breath that I changed the children. Walter is the son of Lord and Lady Rosenbury! Raymond, my son, forgive—"

The name succeeded in a firmer handwriting, as if the dying woman had summoned all her strength in that last effort to undo the wrong she had done.

The book dropped from Lady Rosenbury's

lap, and Walter started from the amazed trance into which the perusal of that last confession of his dead nurse had plunged him, in time to catch her fainting form in his arms.

He bore her to the lounge, sprinkled her white face with water, chafed her hands, and as he knelt beside her cried, in a voice thrilling with a mighty, resistless joy and love,—

"Mother! Oh, mother, speak to me! I am your son—your own son Walter!"

Lady Rosenbury recovered her consciousness before that thrilling cry, and she opened her eyes to find herself clasped to Walter's breast, and to find Walter's tear-wet face pressed against her own, while he lavished caresses upon her.

"It is true, then!" she exclaimed, half arising. "Oh, my son! my son!"

It would be vain to attempt a description of their great joy.

They received the dying Mrs. Lorraine's incoherent confession as a statement of the truth, and neither could have doubted it had they tried.

All was now explained—their instinctive love for each other, Lady Rosenbury's aversion to Raymond, his resemblance to Mrs. Lorraine, and Walter's likeness to the late Lord Rosenbury.

A thousand incidents and circumstances were remembered to confirm the dying woman's words.

"Oh, Walter!" said her ladyship, as soon as she had partially regained her calmness. "The only thing that mars my joy is that your dear father has not lived to see this day. He loved you so, while believing you the son of Lorraine, and he mourned so over the strange nature of Raymond!"

"But he loved me," Walter urged as a consolation.

"Yes, my son. How sweetly that title sounds! I never called Raymond 'my son'—I couldn't! Have you thought of dear Geraldine's joy? She will be my daughter, after all, and her husband will not be the obscurely born painter she now expects. You know you are now Lord Rosenbury!"

Walter expressed the joy he felt on Geraldine's account, and then a shadow flitted across the brightness of his face as he said,—

"Dear mother, this will be a hard blow for Raymond—"

"But no more than he deserves," replied Lady Rosenbury. "He was with his mother, Mrs. Lorraine, when she died, and heard the truth from her lips. He has known himself an usurper ever since. And, my son, the secret of Lorraine's connection with Raymond is now explained. Lorraine's attempt to kill you is also explained. I can only wonder that I never suspected the truth before."

"And I too wonder that I never did," remarked Walter. "There was so much in the conduct of Mrs. Lorraine at times, as in her husband's, that was altogether unexplainable upon the ordinary hypothesis, and yet I never had the faintest suspicion that I was not their son. What joy it is to feel that I derive my being from you and my dear father!"

Lady Rosenbury replied that his happiness could not be greater than her own, and added,—

"The first thing to be done is to make your discovery known to Raymond, and then to instate you in your rightful position. The carriage is waiting at the door, Walter. Bring that dear old Bible with you, and let us go home at once and take immediate steps for your recognition."

She arose with feverish eagerness to take her departure.

(To be continued.)

WATERMILLS are of ancient date. The first one ever built, according to best accounts, was erected on the river Tiber, at Rome, A. D. 50. Windmills were in original use in the twelfth century. Tidemills were operated in Venice about 1708. Sawmills are said to have been in use at Arburg, Germany, about 1822.

## A GIRL'S HEART.

### CHAPTER XI.

He was thinking of Alwynne Brabante.

He wondered vaguely whether he should ever be able to have two consecutive thoughts that had no connection, or did not touch in the very smallest degree, on Alwynne.

It was almost incomprehensible to him, how this girl had grown so much a part of his quiet, reticent self, yet there was no irritation in the remembrance. Instead, it was strangely soothing to him. There was no bitterness in one single recollection of this beautiful girl, with her cold, almost imperiously cold, indifference to him.

He had accepted her dismissal quietly, but there was no sense of hopelessness in his heart as he left the ship at Queenstown, and travelled on to London by himself. If he felt any anger at all it was against himself. He might have gauged this girl's nature and character better. He had had no right to speak of so intimate a subject after so short and unsatisfactory an acquaintance. He had only met with his just deserts.

He frowned now as he strolled on, and recalled the impatience that had forced him to broach such a serious question as marriage to Alwynne. There was no abatement of the desire within his breast to link her life to his; on the contrary, since their separation his feelings had only deepened and intensified threefold, but his impatience was curbed. He told himself he must not allow impatience to come into the matter at all. He must win and woo Alwynne in quite another way.

His pulses thrilled as he pictured to himself her gradual surrender. He felt she did not hate him; in fact, before she had changed to him so strangely, he had imagined without vanity that her sympathy and liking went out towards him spontaneously, and without any restraint. She was free to be wooed, too. Did he not know that from her mother, who had conveyed the information in the most delicate, tactful, yet most decided fashion?

She was free, therefore he would woo her; and looking into the depths of her pure eyes he would lose the pain and shadow of his former sorrow, and live again a man without a sigh or regret in life. The very thought of it brought a look to his face that rolled at least ten years off his age.

The love he had for Alwynne was something he had never felt before. His wife had carried his passion, the baser part of his nature, by storm, as it were, blinding his eyes and his judgment by the brilliancy of her personality, keeping the passion at fever-heat by all the arts of a practised and born coquette. When disillusionment had come there had been no sentiment, no noble influences to give even an instant's relief; and the shame that finished the story was one that struck the iron of despair through the pride of his heart, not through the love.

It had been the remembrance of this stained honour and shamed pride that had driven him away, a wanderer in strange lands, and made him grow so cold and cynical and bitter towards all men and women save his sister, perhaps, and her belongings, until the day that he had looked into Alwynne's flower-like face, and had stood silent and reverent before the unspeakable purity of her young soul, revealed to him so unexpectedly, yet so surely.

It was as though the sun had suddenly broken through some great heavy cloud, and, fired by all its powers, had bent its golden warm on some great block of ice before it, moving it gently but surely, and softening it until it fell apart, and murmured away in tiny rivulets. So melted the bitterness, the scepticism, out of Hugo's heart, as he stood basking in the warmth and glory of Alwynne's beautiful, innocent, soulful eyes! She had changed him back to the man he had been before the

great blow of his life had fallen—to the same man, and yet to a better.

His whole mind was impregnated with the girl's individuality. He yearned for her all at once, as he walked through the grounds of this, one of his most noble possessions.

"My queen! my heart!" he said to himself, suddenly. In imagination he pictured her coming towards him beneath the famous old trees that were just beginning to break into green once more. Every grace of her beautiful person was remembered, and in fancy he could read the pleasure his presence called up, radiating her lovely face. The visions were so complete, so absolute, Hugo's heart-beat quickened, and a flush dawned on his dark skin.

"I will not be too impatient, but I cannot wait too long. In a few days, a week, perhaps, I will go up to town again. By that time they will have returned to their hotel from the country. They will not stay away very long, for Mrs. Brabant was quite decided on remaining in town till the end of the season. I will be so careful when I see her."

Hugo had flung away his cigar, and was walking on, only mechanically his thoughts were so busy and so beautiful in their hopefulness.

"I will be as ceremonious, as distant, as she would desire. She does not hate me. Hate! The meaning of the word must be unknown to such as she. She liked me in our first meeting. Pray Heaven she will like me again, and like me better and better as she grows to know me. We have at least one subject of mutual interest in Basil Canning. I feel she will be glad to think I have already helped the boy so much. Poor little chap! How surprised he was to see me turn up so soon after his arrival in the great city! His gratitude was sincere at all events; and how touched he was to think I should have busied myself about his small affairs before looking to my own!"

Hugo turned to look back for the stalwart figure of his brother-in-law. He smiled a little at his next thought.

"If one were always as honest with the world as one is with oneself!" he mused. "If I had been truthful with that boy, and had told him my real reason for being in London so soon after my arrival! Well," he laughed softly, "it was a very harmless reason, and one that Basil would have appreciated most fully, for I think his adoration for her exceeds even mine; and I take it he would gladly have accompanied me when I went to call on Mrs. Brabant if only for the chance of a glimpse at Alwynne's face. Doubtless, too, Mrs. Brabant would have condescended to receive such a humble guest had he made his appearance at the hotel under my wing!"

Whereby it showed that Lord Taunton had not been long in understanding a little of the nature of the marvellously handsome and somewhat mysterious woman whom Alwynne called her mother.

The visit to the horses was prolonged until there was only a very little time to rush into his clothes for dinner. Lady Gus almost glared at her unfortunate husband when the two men made a tardy and apologetic appearance in the small drawing-room. Was this how Jack remembered his lesson? Was this how he intended to help her in the question of throwing Hugo and Blanche together? Lady Gus felt almost murderous, and she flashed her pretty eyes ominously at her husband's handsome, amused face.

"Wait until I get a good chance, and I will pinch you!" she whispered, maliciously, in his ear. Out loud she dismissed the horses.

"I wonder you men don't have your homes built in the stables altogether!" she declared. "Really, how any one can be so foolish as to imagine themselves attractive or fascinating in the very least degree is something I am beginning not to understand. Give a man a straggly, knock kneed, bay mare, or a roan, or a chestnut, or what not, and he will turn his back on the most beautiful woman in the world!"

Hugo laughed outright.

"The same spiffire as of yore, Gus! Jack, why don't you muzzle this little person?"

Lady Gus managed to convey homicide in all its horrors at her, not in the least dismayed better-half, while Lord Taunton turned to Miss Glenlee.

"I hope you are not going to be ungenerous enough to back Gusie up in this most outrageous speech?" he said, lightly.

Miss Glenlee smiled. She was lying back in her chair, looking singularly attractive in her black velvet dinner dress, which displayed her white neck and arms to their fullest advantage. Her hair by candlelight was perhaps too pale; it lost the warmth that the sun's rays discovered, and her face perhaps without a hat was too round and not so handsome; still she was undeniably a beautiful woman for those who admired large proportions, and a preponderance of delicate colouring over intellectual qualities.

Hugo had always been impressed with Blanche Glenlee's large, languid beauty; but beyond admiring her, as he always admired all that was satisfaction in either nature or art, she did not in the least appeal to him. He did not like ac-called smart women, who thought it their duty to rub the edges off everyone they met by the pungency of their wit, but he also abominated fools, and had nothing in common with dull brains.

Blanche Glenlee was certainly not a fool, but she was certainly by no means an intellectual woman. Her very languor, which at some times had acted such a soothing influence upon him, at others irritated him almost to a verge of nervousness. He had a distinct longing to take her by her two shapely shoulders, and shake the sleepy look from her whole individuality, and the apathetic indifference out of her big blue eyes.

Lady Gus was distinctly out of her reckoning when she let her fertile little brain plan and manoeuvre on a matrimonial alliance between her friend and her brother. Woman-like, however, she allowed herself to fall into the error that what was satisfactory to her rather difficult fancy must naturally be satisfactory to Hugo.

Miss Glenlee smiled at Lord Taunton's speech.

"Gus knows more about horses than I do. I think I am a little afraid of them, perhaps; that is why I don't care about them."

Lady Gus drew her brows into a line, the nearest approach to a frown which she ever permitted herself. This last remark of Blanche's was distinctly not successful. To tell Hugo or any other Englishman she did not care about horses was—well, it was not a remark calculated to encourage much sympathy.

Hugo, however, was impressed neither one way or the other by Miss Glenlee's frank confession. He felt he must do his duty and talk to her, though he would infinitely have preferred a continuation of his long chat with Jack Trevelyan on all matters of sport, foreign and otherwise, or to have ensconced himself in one of the easy chairs and dived into *The Field* and other masculine papers, whose appearance had been very unfrequent and very stale during his varied travels.

Place and Dames was, however, with Hugo absolutely a creed, and he carried out his courtesy in this respect, even to the humblest of the feminine servants who waited upon him.

If he had confessed the absolute truth of his heart, he would have said that he would have been just as pleased if there had been no stranger sojourning within his gates on this his first appearance at his old home; but he kept this feeling so well hidden that Lady Gus had no intimation of the fact that Hugo could have dispensed most willingly and easily with Miss Glenlee's presence, despite her beautiful complexion and yellow hair.

Dinner passed over merrily, thanks to Lady Gus.

The conversation turned on Blair Hunter and his extraordinarily handsome face.

"I have imagined all sorts of romances about him!" Lady Gus cried. "The first day I saw him playing the organ in the old church I assure you, Hugo, he seemed to me like some spirit from another world. Blanche, didn't you feel inclined to fall in love with him on the spot?"

"No, I don't think so," Miss Glenlee said, stolidly surveying the fruit on the plate with a ruminating air, as though the question put to her was something that required her minute attention.

"Well, and have your romances any good foundation?" Lord Taunton inquired.

Mr. Trevelyan made a face at his wife.

"Gus wants to believe he is some prince in disguise; whereas, if the truth were known, I fully expect he will turn out to be a pork-butcher!"

"Oh! how nasty!" ejaculated Miss Glenlee, and her shapely hand paused as she was about to convey a grape to her lips. "Just fancy, and we travelled from town with him!"

Lord Taunton could not resist from smiling. His sister's sudden exclamation at her husband's prosaic theory was not so amusing to him as the absolute faith with which Miss Glenlee accepted any statement, and she righteous horror she exhibited at the mere possibility of having been brought into the same atmospheric space with a plebeian, if only for a short period.

Rubbing about the globe had certainly rubbed off the corners of Hugo's class prejudices, if ever they had been strongly planted in his mind. Having hobnobbed with all sorts and conditions of men, this expression of the old-fashioned, narrow-minded traditions that were so fast dying out was refreshing in one sense, while it roused his contempt in another.

"Don't listen to Jack. Miss Glenlee," he said, while he gave his brother-in-law a glance from his wonderful eyes. "He is simply jealous of this very uncommon-looking young man, that is all. For my part Gus's ideal is the right one, and our musical Adonis must be some princely person in disguise."

"He certainly was most distinguished, and had charming manners," Miss Glenlee confessed, not entering in the least into the very small joke of the moment. "But then," looking up at him again with her sleepy, stupid eyes, "then someone would be sure to know something about him; and then, why should he choose such a place to live in, and why?"

Lady Gus frowned almost entirely this time. A glance at her husband's gravely amused face, and a knowledge that Hugo was intent on cutting his pear into a multitude of shavings he would never eat, made her annoyance at her friend's almost incomprehensible stupidity amount for a moment to anger.

"Blanche never used to be so dull!" she thought to herself, "soiresome. If there is one thing Hugo appreciates more than another it is a touch of humour!" And then Lady Gus calmed down. "After all, how does one know this unconscious simplicity may not just be the only charm he admires most? He must have had a plethora of sharp-witted women out in that abominable America. There is no doubt he admires her, and she certainly does look splendid in evening dress? I don't know anyone with such a neck and arms as Blanche has!"

All the same, Lady Gus could not help confessing to herself, as she led her guest into the small drawing-room again, that so far her matrimonial manoeuvres did not show any prospect of being crowned with immediate and glorious success.

## CHAPTER XII.

The first week of Lord Taunton's return was passed very quietly at Torre Abbey. Acting on his distinct wish Lady Gus invited no other guests, nor indulged in no entertainments of any sort or description.

She was never dull herself; and when she was not seated on her nursery floor playing and prattling with her two babies, she was either driving Miss Glensie briskly through the avenues of budding trees, or riding early in the morning with Hugo and her husband while Miss Glensie still slumbered peacefully on her pillow, or dashing wildly round to some one or another of her many proteges, or sitting at the piano, filling the old room with the sound of her sweet, pathetic little voice. Lady Gus was never still for long together.

"An absolute impossibility to make her sit in one place for more than ten minutes! I give you my word! I had to stretch down when she had just nearly dropped off! Dandy a year ago. Old Ferguson declared she must lie in bed for at least a week. So declared Mr. Trevelyan to Lord Taunton."

"And I was up riding Dandy again in three days!" cried Lady Gus, triumphantly. "As for you," turning to her husband and snapping her small fingers, "and old Ferguson, and all the doctors rolled in, that's that! that!" a vigorous snap following each "that!"

"Now I ask you, Taunton, what am I to do with such a creature as this?"

Hugo laughed suddenly, seized the small bird-like form, launched it in the air, and planted it on his shoulder.

"Any more insubordination," he observed, as Lady Gus clung to his neck, laughing, "and you will see what a brother's wrath is like, my lady!"

"Do you think I am frightened of you?" cried the little individual, contemptuously. "Why! I am most comfortable up here! What a lovely broad shoulder you have, to be sure, Hugo! No, don't trouble to put me down! I assure you I quite enjoy being so high in the world!"

"Jack, you are a much-to-be-pitied man!" Lord Taunton's face conveyed the most supreme commiseration.

He, however, made no effort to dislodge his pretty burden, but strolled leisurely about the hall with it, whistling softly.

Lady Gus, despite her brave indifference, was none too comfortable; she had to cling desperately to her brother's neck. She was conscious that she was exhibiting a good quarter of a yard of most shapely leg and ankle, that her husband was enjoying a hearty laugh at her expense, and the grave-faced butler was trying in vain to maintain his composure in the distance.

But all the same, she did not mean to acknowledge herself discomfited just yet. In all fun and merriment there ran mingling with it a deeper feeling—a feeling of intense gladness at the daily convincing evidence of the great change in her brother's mental condition.

He no longer haunted her dreams at night with visions of his dark face—sombre and sorrowful—the brand of a sin and shame on his open brow; no longer did his gloomy manner and quiet voice rank her tender little heart with pity and pain!

It was almost the Hugo of bygone childhood days who lived with her now, romping and teasing and playing with her as with some kitten.

"Thank Heaven! oh! thank Heaven!" thought little Lady Gus, as she banged her head, not without some difficulty, to drop a kiss on the dark head, round which her arm was clasped. "I never thought to see him smile again, and now he is grown the same as of old! Only it seems to me as though there were the gleam of something even happier possible to him now than there was then. Does he love Blanche already? It must be that. Oh! she must be good to him; she must not sweep away one grain of his precious love or do anything. But what am I thinking of? As if Blanche could do such a thing! I can give her no higher praise than when I say I find her worthy to be Hugo's wife," and then Lady Gus gave a tiny squeal.

"Oh! darling, let me down! let me down! Look, there is someone coming up the avenue. Oh! Hugo, dear, dear, sweet darling! I will adore you for ever if only you will put me down, my dear!" in an absolute agony. "Just look at my leg!"

"It is an admirable leg!" Lord Taunton quoth, quietly, glancing at the tiny foot in its exquisite silk casing. "Yes, I admire it very much!"

"Jack, Jack, you wretch! you unmanly monster! Will you see your wife, the mother of your children, treated in this infamous way? Jack, how dare you laugh like that! Oh! if only I were down on the ground! Hugo, sweet, dear brother, I beg! I beseech! I entreat! I can hear someone's footsteps crunching on the gravel. Oh! do!"

Mr. Trevelyan stood in the entrance. "It is your Adonis, the princely pork-butcher!"

Lady Gus managed to smother a scream, and pinched her brother's ear, who, laughing heartily, allowed her to slip to the ground just as Mr. Blair Hunter appeared in the big doorway.

Hugo looked casually enough at his sister's latest admirer at first; but as the young man came into the hall he found himself scrutinizing the extraordinarily handsome face and bearing very closely. Two things at once impressed themselves upon his mind vaguely enough just to begin with, but deepening as his thoughts progressed. One of these things was the fact, a little surprising when realized, though why it should have been so Hugo could hardly have explained, that this young man, with his sunny hair and god-like face, was not, after all, so young. In years, perhaps, he might not have so great a count to make; but in wisdom of the world, in knowledge of that world's ways, Lord Taunton suddenly felt as though he stood in the presence of a centenarian. The other fact—and this was more definite, and less pleasant—was the determination—that Lady Gus's musical Adonis was by no means a sympathetic individual to Lady Gus's brother.

"Not a fellow I would trust a yard," Hugo thought, suddenly and abruptly, to himself. He could not have defused whence or why this feeling should have come. He only knew it had come, and would remain. After all, however, a like or dislike of this kind must be so very casual, he went on to think; for beyond seeing Mr. Blair Hunter seated at the organ, perhaps, once a week, Hugo would not necessarily be brought in contact with him. He could not help regretting a little, nevertheless, that his sister should be so cordial in her welcome of the young organist, about whom she had had to confess she knew little or nothing. Glancing at Jack Trevelyan, Lord Taunton felt at once his brother-in-law, if not wholly objecting to him, was not altogether enamoured of his wife's protegee.

Both men were, however, needless to say, most courteous in their greeting of the young man, and Lord Taunton was not a little surprised when, after a few moments' desultory conversation, dealing with the purport of his visit to the Abbey, Blair Hunter turned to him and said—

"I wonder if I may venture to express some gratitude to you, Lord Taunton—gratitude which I assume is most sincere?"

Hugo bowed assent, of course, though much mystified; and his eyes opened for an instant, as Hunter went on—

"I allude to your great kindness on behalf of my young kinsman, Basil Canning. He has told me of your goodness to him; and I know, how sorely he had need of assistance, felt, perhaps you would not object to allow me to add my grateful thanks to his."

"Indeed no thanks, whatever," Hugo answered at once; and though he endeavored not to show it, a certain reserve came into his voice. "I am only too glad to give a helping hand to any one; and I thought, and still think, this little chap deserves it. He told me

he had some kin in England, but did not mention your name, or of course—"

"Oh! of course," said Blair Hunter, airily. Lady Gus was intensely interested.

"But do tell me all about it," she cried. "Just fancy! How small the world is. Hugo, I suppose you never dreamed of having met a connection of Mr. Hunter's anywhere?"

"Never!" Hugo said, quietly. He was astonished, and not altogether pleased, to find that the lad, in whom he had taken so much definite interest, and for whom Alwynne had shown such decided friendship, should be intimately connected with one whom he felt intuitively was an individual as far below the average in moral calibre as he was above it in physical perfections.

If Mr. Hunter noticed the cold, curt way in which his gratitude was accepted he did not let it appear. He at once continued his conversation with Lady Gus on the subject of a small concert they were arranging for the delation of the villages of old and new Torre some time during the forthcoming fortnight, and Hugo and Jack Trevelyan strolled away together.

"Run sort of chap that!" Mr. Trevelyan said, as he struck a match and lit his cigar. "Can't quite make him out?" he said this in a half-questioning way.

"Not a very difficult problem to solve if we wanted to solve it, I dare say," was Lord Taunton's reply, as he, too, had recourse to the fragrant weed.

"Think he is a bad lot, eh?"

"I think," Hugo said, as he flung away a match, "that I have met something like him before in my many travels. Bit of an adventurer. I should say, whose face decidedly is his fortune!"

"My little bird will take such fancies!" Jack Trevelyan said, half-apologetically, and half-lightly. "Bless her heart, all is gold that glitters to her, Taunton!"

"Long may it be so, Jack! but don't run away with the notion I know anything about this chap. Never set eyes on him before! It's only a sort of instinct that warns me always where and where not I can put my trust. Quagga it knocking about as I have done, and a very necessary adjunct to one's daily life it is, I can tell you, for one meets with some strange customers, and it is best to have some sort of agent on the track to put one on one's guard. No, I know nothing about this Adonis, but I don't think he is either a prince or a pork-butcher, or, indeed, anything so dull or honest."

"What about this boy he calls his kinsman?"

Hugo told briefly all he had to tell about Basil Canning.

"Just as honest and true a lad to look on as this fellow is false!" he declared.

"You rush soon to a conclusion!" Trevelyan said, not without a lingering touch of just reserve in his voice.

"I do," Hugo said, kicking a stone ahead of him. "It's a bad habit, I am afraid, only habits are such damned things to cling to one, and," with a little pause, "after such an experience as I have had, one is apt to jump to a conclusion without much hesitation."

It was the first mention he had made as yet of his old sorrow and trouble.

Jack Trevelyan smoked on in silence. He felt it required a more delicate tact than his to broach the subject of the past. Yet, as the silence continued, he felt he must speak.

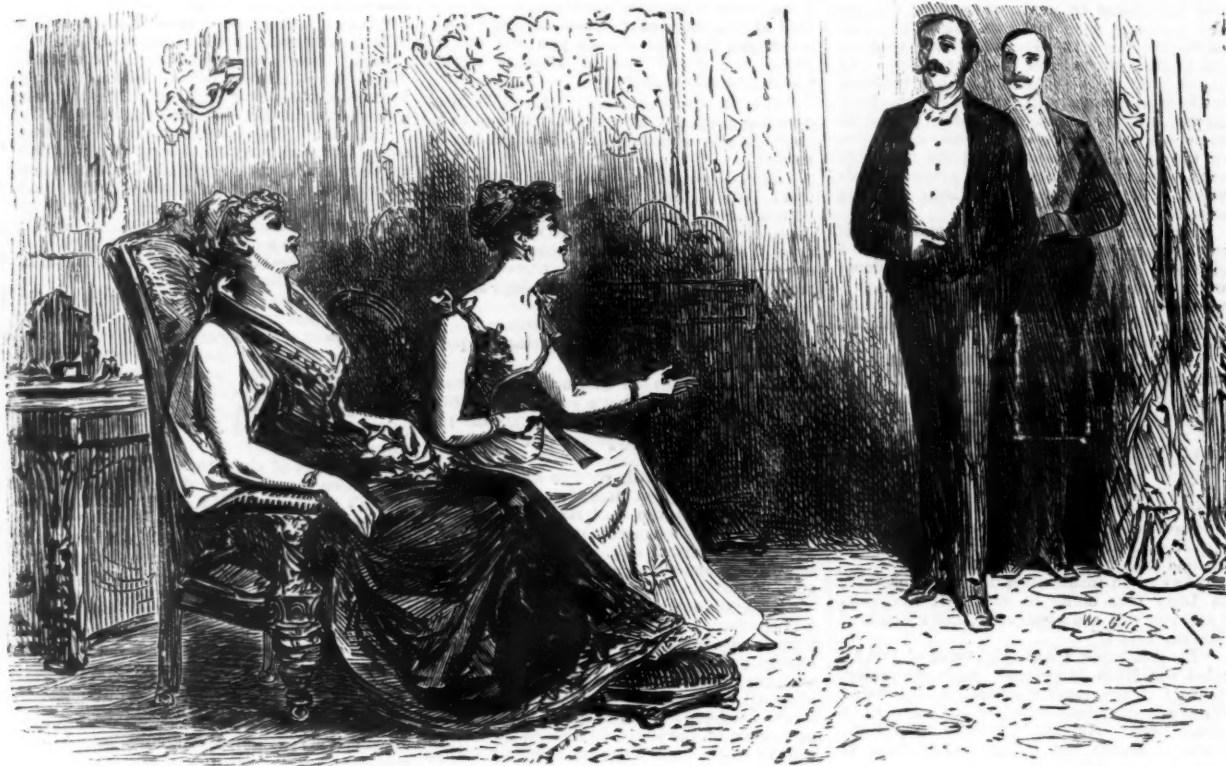
"You had life a little better now, old chap, don't you?" he said, abruptly, as they walked on.

Taunton paused a moment before he answered.

"I find life, as I never hoped to find it again, bright and beautiful. Jack, once more beautiful in a higher, better sense, beautiful in an infinity of hope, and a premonition of coming happiness."

Trevelyan was silent again, his thoughts busy.

"He means Blanche," he said to himself.



[MISS GLENLEE WAS LYING BACK IN HER CHAIR, LOOKING SINGULARLY ATTRACTIVE IN HER BLACK VELVET DINNER DRESS.]

"So my little bird was not so wrong after all! Certainly life and humanity are strange questions to answer. If I had been asked straightforwardly what I thought of this matter I should have said that Blanche Glenlee was absolutely the last, the very last, woman in the world to make Hugo speak such words as he has just spoken! Gus is right, after all, when she calls me an old completion, for verily the more I live the more I learn."

Both men were silent after this almost for the space of ten minutes, neither of them in the least divining how utterly at variance their mutual thoughts were.

Taunton spoke first.

"Do you want me to go to Tattersall's for you?" he asked, as he flung away the end of his cigar. "I shall run up to town to-morrow and stay until Tuesday."

Jack Trevelyan looked his surprise a little. This was the first intimation Hugo had given of a journey to London.

"Well, if you can see a decent sort of hack not too big a price," and then they were fairly launched on the horse question again, and other matters dropped.

Lady Gus did not take such a philosophical view of her brother's departure as her husband.

"Going to town? What for? Tattersall's? Oh, the usual old story! Horses! horses! horses! I declare if a fairy came to me now and asked me, 'if not yourself who or what would you be?' I would say, unhesitatingly, make me a horse!"

"And a lovely little animal you would make!" Mr. Trevelyan observed, enthusiastically.

Lady Gus boxed his ears lightly, and reverted to her trouble.

"So disappointing, just as Blanche and he were getting on so well, too! I quite thought last night at dinner that they looked as

though they were really falling in love at last!"

"Well, I think you may continue to think that," Mr. Trevelyan observed, and then he proceeded to repeat what Hugo had said.

Lady Gus was enobanted.

"Really, I never thought to be so successful so soon. Why, Jack, it took you ages to fall in with me—don't you remember?"

Mr. Trevelyan gathered his wife into his arms and kissed her pretty lips. "My little bird!" he said, tenderly.

They were in Lady Gus's own particular sanctum. Some letters were lying on the table. She picked up one, and gave it to her husband.

"Poor Lena! she is distraught about her mother's death. I am so sorry for her."

"Does she mention Graham at all?" queried Mr. Trevelyan.

Lady Gus shook her head.

"But Blanche had a letter from Lady Rose last night, and she told me it was common report that Sir Henry was going to be married immediately to this other woman. Surely, Jack, he must be socially ostracised for such an act of indecency!"

"Graham doesn't care for society, and he knows his value to the State. But it is a damnable state of affairs, anyhow!"

Lord Taunton kissed his sister a short farewell on the morrow, and carried away with him a somewhat long list of commissions he had undertaken for Miss Glenlee.

He sighed a sigh of relief and excitement as he drove through the soft spring air to Westchester.

It was more than a week since he had called at the hotel, and been informed that Mrs. and Miss Brabante had gone away for a few days into the country. By now they must surely be returned. Even if they were not it was a relief to be doing something other than leading a life of monotonous routine and waiting in the country.

And then if she were there—as no doubt she was!

Hugo's dark face flushed, and the blue in his eyes deepened. He had set himself a hard task when he determined to be patient where Alwynne was concerned.

(To be continued.)

THE fastest travelling in England is made by an express train between Grantham and Leicester. The distance is seventy-one and a half miles, and the trip is usually made in fifty-six minutes—a speed exceeding a mile and a quarter a minute.

A MAN cannot do two things at a time. A woman will broil a steak, and see that the coffee does not boil over, and watch the cat that she does not steal the remnant of meat on the kitchen table, and dress the youngest boy, and set the table, and see to the toast, and stir the catmeal, and give the orders to the butcher, and she can do it all at once and not half try. Man has done wonders since he came before the public. He has navigated the ocean, he has penetrated the mysteries of the starry heavens, he has harnessed the lightning and made it pull street cars, and light the great cities of the world. But he can't find a spool of red thread in his wife's work-basket; he can't discover her pocket in a dress hanging in the closet; he cannot hang out clothes and get them on the line the right end up. He cannot hold clothes pins in his mouth while he is doing it either. He cannot be polite to somebody he hates. He would never think of kissing his rival when he met him, as a woman will kiss her rival. He can't sit in a rocking-chair without banging the rockers into the base boards. He can't put the tidy on the sofa pillow right side out. He cannot sew on a button. In short, he cannot do a hundred things that women do almost instinctively.



["YOU ARE MISS ORMOND?" MR. CHEVIOT ASKED, HURRIEDLY.]

NOVELETTE.]

## NAN'S GUARDIAN.

## CHAPTER I.

THERE are essentially commonplace houses, just as there are decidedly commonplace people—houses built without the slightest regard for good taste or high art, but which yet are healthy and comfortable, provided the tenants are not people with a longing for the beautiful, or possessed of such very sensitive tempers that ugly surroundings are positively afflictions to them.

Such a house was Albani Villa, Camberwell, or—as Mrs. Browne much preferred to call it—Denmark Hill.

It possessed every comfort and every requisite for a family of moderate size. It was cheap, convenient, and healthy; but, it must be confessed, it was ugly—marvellously ugly.

In the first place, the builder had been possessed of very few ideas, and, therefore, the six houses which composed Summer-road were all precisely alike.

Although detached, and each boasting a somewhat high-flown name (for the most part borrowed from popular singers), the half dozen villas were so identical that they must have taken precisely the same number of bricks and panes of glass—a green door, with a brass knocker, a window each side and six windows above, a limited—very limited—grass plot in front; and railings, painted green, to match the door—one gate for the tradespeople, leading straight to the area, the other for visitors, just opposite the green door. What could have been handier?

Mrs. Browne was not artistic, neither did she belong to that class who have "seen better days." On the contrary, she had seen decidedly worse, and took possession of Albani Villa

with great satisfaction—not in the least minding that the blinds were a brilliant blue Venetian, which, with the red brick walls, green door and gates, made up a slightly large variety of colour.

Mr. Browne was "Something in the City." He had seven children and a niece—a girl of eighteen, with dark, thoughtful, grey eyes, real auburn hair, a sweet wistful face; a creature quite different from the plump, cheerful young Brownes, and though the poorest of the family, the only one whose taste revolted from the extreme ugliness of Albani Villa.

Not that Glyn Ormond was in the least snubbed or put upon by her relations.

The Brownes were good-hearted and hospitable to the core. They were very fond of Glyn, and made much of her in their own hearty fashion.

If she had been dependent on them for everything she would still have been welcome, for her mother's sake—the pretty young sister whom Mr. Browne had never quite forgotten, and whom his wife had petted almost as a child of her own.

But, as it happened, Glyn was not quite penniless. Her father, a young officer, had been persuaded by Mr. Browne to insure his life for a thousand pounds before he married, and this sum reverted to his only child.

"You are young, and the premium won't be much," the business man said, gravely. "Mary's not fit to rough it, and a soldier's life is full of changes. If you're going to take my sister to the world's end the least you can do is to see to her future."

And Hector Ormond, who was very much in love, agreed. He was marrying beneath him and against his family's wishes, for his father, the Honourable Charles Ormond, had found an heiress, whom he desired for a daughter-in-law.

Perhaps Hector had the foresight to see his Mary would gain little help from his aristocratic relations if she was left a widow.

They married, and went out to India. One year later Mary Ormond died, and Glyn, aged five weeks, was sent home to her uncle and aunt, who had cabled out their willingness to receive her.

She reached England when Mrs. Browne was mourning her two eldest children, and she straightway became the darling of the house. Her father contrived to contribute something to her maintenance; but before she was three years' old he followed her mother to the silent land. The Ormonds, one and all, ignored his little girl, and Mr. and Mrs. Browne were well content to keep her. By her father's will all he had became hers. It was little enough, poor fellow, except the thousand pounds for which he had been persuaded to insure his life, and he appointed William Browne her sole guardian until she reached the age of eighteen.

Mrs. Browne was a good woman, albeit a prosaic one. She saw that her little niece was taught all she deemed necessary for her own girls; she took her wherever they went, and loved her only after them; but with all the goodwill in the world she never understood the child, who was so different to her own brood. The little girl's very name was a trial to her. Glyn was a time-honoured title among the Ormonds; to Susan Browne it did not seem fit for a Christian child at all, and long before the time the little one could speak she was familiarly known as "Nan," which Mrs. Browne thought an abbreviation of Glyn, quite forgetting that it was only one letter shorter, and had not the slightest resemblance to the original name.

Nan was seven years old when the family settled at Camberwell, and Mr. Browne, having then risen to be a partner in the city firm, his wife launched out into various extra expenses, such as sending her boys to school, and securing a good governess for the girls. This lady still presided over the school room at Albani Villa; for though Nan and her eldest cousin Mary had both done with lessons, the

two next being boys, there was a gap of four years between Mary and her eldest sister; and so the younger Miss Browne, ranging in age from thirteen down to eight, were likely to need an instructress for some years to come.

It was spring—the season of all the year, perhaps, most depressing in the suburbs. Far away in the country the violets and primroses were in bloom, the trees in their early green dress; but though it had been “laid out” seven years, Summer-road was too new to boast any trees. The few stunted laburnum bushes did not deserve the title, and there was something in the soil of the front court, which was antagonistic to flowers, since nothing sown there ever came up; while as to the back garden Mrs. Browne had no notion of its being wasted on anything so useless as flowers. Part of it was used as a drying yard for the weekly wash, and the rest, carefully wired off, formed a pen for a few fowls. It was time to have new-laid eggs, and feel they cost next to nothing; but Nan was shrewd enough to think that the garden of the front house, with its trim flower borders and small lawn, was far pleasanter to look at.

There was no acquaintance between Albani Villa and Patti Lodge. The latter abode was inhabited by a classical tutor and his wife, who, to make both ends meet, took two or three gentlemen as boarders. Mrs. Browne looked down on the Herberts, but Nan regarded their house as a kind of fairyland, into which she longed to penetrate, but dared not.

It had probably had no more, possibly even less, money spent upon it than its next neighbour, but there was a wonderful difference in the general aspect. The brilliant blue Venetian blinds had been removed and replaced by simple ones of art linen, made of a dull grey shade, with a conventional pattern running all over it. The red brick was almost hidden by ivy and Virginian creeper, both planted in the first months of the Herberts' tenancy, and now grown to an almost luxuriant height.

Bearing in mind, probably, the uselessness of the front aspect, Mr. Herbert had converted the space between the railings and the grass plot into a rookery, where common ferns flourished wonderfully. Even the windows were different from other people's; instead of the staring curtains, affected by their neighbours, the Herberts indulged in plain net veils for winter, and simple frilled muslin, edged with cream lace, for summer. There was something very cool and graceful about the house, though Mrs. Browne always said, contemptuously, it had nothing in it worth a penny halfpenny.

It was the end of May, and for the time of year remarkably hot. The sun poured into the dining-room where Nan sat alone at work. The blinds were lowered, out of regard to the curtains and carpet. But Nan did not regret this, for had they been up she would have been regaled with nothing more attractive than the sight of the family linen hanging out to dry, and beyond that a row of consumptive-looking cabbage plants followed by the fowl-yard.

It was quite Nan's own fault that she was at home alone. Her aunt and Mary had gone out to choose new summer bonnets, and if there was one thing this wayward maiden hated more than another, it was a journey to the Borough in a penny-tramway.

Miss Marshall had taken the children for the walk their mother insisted on every afternoon, and a great stillness had fallen on the house, which just suited Nan's mood. Her sewing dropped from her hands, and she leaned back in an arm-chair to indulge in a reverie.

Mrs. Browne was rarely angry with her niece, but she had no patience with Nan's love of doing nothing. It was not exactly that the girl was indolent, only she loved to dream of the bright, gay world which lay beyond her own prosaic life.

She liked to shut her eyes and try to fancy herself surrounded by pretty things, and was contented by sewing or pastry making.

She never uttered a word of complaint to her aunt. She never spoke to Mary of her

fancies. She felt instinctively they would not have understood. But whenever she was alone she loved to let her thoughts soar far away, and to dream her own day-dreams.

As children, she and Mary had always been dressed alike, but Mrs. Browne believed in teaching girls the value of money; and from the day they left off lessons she had given them an allowance of twelve pounds a year, and made over to each the responsibility of her own wardrobe.

Mary was really six months younger than Nan, but she was a marvel of economy, and the wonders she accomplished with her three pounds a quarter were a marvel to everyone.

Nan never equalled her. Mrs. Browne often said remorsefully the girl looked so dowdy as if she never had anything new; and as for a smart frock or bonnet she never thought of such a thing.

But Nan always declared herself quite contented; and though she felt it would be ungrateful to say so, rejoiced in her aunt's freedom of choice allowed her. At least, she was safe now from the terrible shocks and plaids her aunt thought so becoming, and she might wear her hat for six months without being known a long way off by the flower-children.

She was wearing a dress now her aunt always mounted over—a grey bow, without a scrap of trimming, except a long sash of dull silk, and a little white lace at the throat and wrists. It was the first gown she had ever chosen for herself. She had had it nearly two years, and it was still spotless and untroubled. Her aunt called it “dowdy.” Miss Marshall had a vague idea it was childish; but Nan loved it, and would not have changed it for Mary's ruby cashmere.

She was much smaller than her cousin, and though never ailing anything she rarely had any colour. Her pale, creamy skin, her bright auburn hair, and those large, wistful grey eyes made her a great contrast to rosy-cheeked, black-eyed Mary Browne, and yet the two were great friends, and had never had a serious quarrel in their lives.

A thundering knock at the door. Nan started from her seat, wondering who it could be; then she sat down again, with the reflection it was probably a mistake. Her aunt belonged to that race of women—and their number is legion—who do not “call” or have “callers.”

Mrs. Browne, after living six years in Gamberwell, knew plenty of people by sight, but visited no one. Her “friends” were those she had made in her younger days, and jealously kept up ever since. Now and again these would “come over” and spend the afternoon, but always by invitation.

The macon used to say it was a poor compliment to let people come three or four miles and find you out.

“Tea” with Mrs. Browne meant after some days' notice—a substantial meal set out in the dining-room with the best china. Of the pleasant informal dropping-in of friends to take just a cup of tea and a wafer of bread-and-butter she had no notion.

The tax collector, the gas collector, and another like people mostly came in the morning. They never had to call twice, for Mr. Browne sent a cheque as soon as he received their demand.

The clergyman never called at Albani Villa for subscriptions. He had been repulsed too often. And the family did their visiting on such a systematic fashion that a double knock at four o'clock unexpectedly invariably meant what Nan imagined it did now—that someone had mistaken the house.

Also the upper servant was dressing and the younger one helping the washerwoman hang out the clothes. On Mondays things were always a trifle behind hand at Albani Villa.

The knocker descended for the second time before Matilda could rush downstairs, fastening her white apron as she came.

“Is Mr. Browne at home?”

Matilda opened her eyes. Then it was not a mistake after all, and the speaker was evidently a gentleman, not a canvasser trying to lure the master into purchasing cheap teas, or a machine to wash the clothes without labour. No one is a better judge of appearances than a suburban servant. Matilda noticed the glossy beaver hat, the well-out clothes, the silk umbrella, the well got-up white cuffs, and she came to the conclusion the visitor was somebody.

“No, sir.”

“When can I see him?”

“He's never in before seven, sir, except on Saturdays.”

“Could you give me his city address?”

“No, I couldn't sir. I've not been here many weeks, and I don't know it.”

The stranger was an old man with silvery hair, and a clever, intelligent face. Matilda wondered more and more what his business with her master could be.

“Is Mrs. Browne at home?”

“Misses has gone to the Borough with Miss Mary,” replied Matilda. “There's no one in the house at all except Miss Ormond.”

“Your master's niece?”

“Yes, sir. Would you like to see her?”

“If you please.”

Matilda did not quite like the responsibility. He was a gentleman, she would pledge her word on that, but what could he want with Miss Nan. Indeed, what business of any kind could he have with Albani Villa?

“This way, sir. What name shall I say?”

“Mr. Cheviot.”

The drawing room was never used. It was furnished in crimson damask, and this was protected by coverings of brown holland, embellished with scarlet braid. Mr. Cheviot, who possessed a charming Queen Anne's house at Bedford-park, shuddered as he looked round Mrs. Browne's best apartment. He had much ado to keep his seat on the very slippery brown holland chair, but that was not his trouble. As he looked at the huge gilt looking-glass, the gaudy vases, and the paper flowers—as he smelt the close, musty atmosphere, impregnated with beeswax, and realised that this room, terrible as it appeared to him, was yet considered by its owners too good for use—he wondered, with a thrill of horror, what the girl would be like who had spent her eighteen years under Mrs. Browne's surveillance.

“It's a gentleman, Miss Nan!” was Matilda's announcement. “I told him every one was out but you, and he said he'd like to speak to you. His name is Cheviot.”

Mary Browne would have stamped, and protested she was frightened to death if called on to receive a visitor in her mother's absence; but though the cousins had been brought up together they were totally different in character.

Nan rose listlessly from her chair, wished Mr. Cheviot had been miles away before he came, to disturb her rare solitude, but she never dreamed of keeping him waiting. To hear what he had to say, and to get rid of him as soon as possible, was her idea.

Mr. Cheviot was not an impressionable man. At sixty most people, especially lawyers, have done with that sort of thing; but as the little grey-robed figure entered he could have believed that the years had rolled back, and he was in the presence of another Glyn Ormond, a girl as young as this, and who had once been his promised wife.

Ah, well, that was in the days when the Honourable Charles was a poor man, and had thought the family lawyer a very good match for his eldest daughter. The dream was passed and over, for the elder Glyn had died before her wedding day, but it was the recollection of his first love which, even after all these years, disposed Niel Cheviot to be gentle and considerate to the girl who was her namesake.

“You are Miss Ormond?” he asked, hurriedly; “but of course you are! I should

have known you anywhere by your resemblance to your aunt."

Glyn opened her grey eyes in surprise. "No one ever thought me like Aunt Susan before. My uncle says I do not take after any of my relations."

Mr. Cheviot felt devoutly thankful that the relations she did resemble were the other side of the house. He relapsed into silence, and Nan, who felt a little perplexed, did not know what to say next.

"I am very sorry my aunt is out. I do not expect her till after five, and Uncle William never comes home much before seven."

"And they have left you at home like a little Cinderella, while they take their pleasure?" said Mr. Cheviot, indignantly; "but we'll soon alter that!"

Nan set him right.

"Aunt Susan wanted me to go, but I hate riding in tramways, and I can't bear shopping, and I thought it would be beautiful to have a long, quiet afternoon; but you must not think they are unkind to me. Aunt Susan spoils me terribly. Mary says so!"

"Who is Mary?"

"My eldest cousin. She is six months younger than I am."

"And you are just eighteen?"

"Yes; I can't think who you are," she said, frankly, "to ask such strange questions. Do you know my uncle well?"

"I never saw him in my life, but I called on him to-day on important business."

"He never does business here. You had better go and see him in the city."

"Perhaps I shall," said Mr. Cheviot, gravely; "but first I want you to tell me two or three things. Are you happy here?"

"I ought to be," said Nan, slowly, "only I am very ungrateful. You see, Mr. Cheviot, I do so love pretty things, and there is nothing pretty at Albani Villa."

"But your uncle and aunt are kind to you?"

"They are just as kind as they can be, only Aunt Susan is almost in despair about me. Mary is six months younger than I am, and she can scold the servants or make bargains as well as her mother, and I am no good at all!"

Mr. Cheviot smiled.

"Perhaps you prefer enjoying yourself with your young friends?"

"I haven't got any. People come to tea sometimes, and Aunt Susan takes me visiting now and then, but we never see anyone young. They are generally people uncle knows in the city, and whose children are at school. Mary knows one or two girls, but I never cared for them."

"Why not?"

"You see, they giggled so, and when I wanted to know what there was to laugh at it never seemed funny."

"You are too old for your age, Glyn."

"Please don't call me that."

"Miss Ormond then."

The girl smiled.

"Oh, no one says that. I am always called Nan."

"But in the name of goodness why?"

"I suppose when Mary came, and I could not be baby any longer, they had to think of something, and Aunt Susan thought Glyn sounded like a boy. She says Nan is the short for it."

Mr. Cheviot smiled.

"I prefer Glyn."

"So do I, only they would not like it here. Uncle can't bear anything peculiar."

"I should think not," said Mr. Cheviot, with a strange glance round the room. "Now, Miss Nan, will you give me Mr. Browne's address in the city, and I will call upon him to-morrow?"

Nan gave it promptly, adding—

"Shall I give him any message, Mr. Cheviot?"

"Only that I hope to call about eleven."

He was gone. Nan looked round the brown holland drawing room, and wondered why she

hated that room more than all the rest of Albani Villa put together.

The stranger had spoilt her long afternoon of day-dreams, and yet she was hardly sorry. He had interested her, and aroused her curiosity. He seemed so different from the men who sometimes visited her uncle; and why, oh! why, had he told her she was like her aunt?

## CHAPTER II.

It is quite astonishing what strange changes fortune can bring to pass in a family when the property is strictly entailed. Without that last condition fortune and chance have not so free a hand.

Nearly every rich man, if childless, has some dear familiar friend he would like to endow with at least a portion of his wealth, but once saddled with an entail property must be kept in the family, and two or three unexpected deaths will make a great person of a detrimental.

So had it been with the Honourable Charles Ormond. At the time his son Hector chose to marry Mary Browne the Honourable Charles was very badly off. He had retired from the army, and taken an estate agency for a roving nobleman.

On his half-pay and salary he had to bring up a family of eight children as became the descendants of an earl.

Two brothers, both married, stood between him and the family honour, and, to do him justice, he never once gave a thought to the remote chance that if these and their children were cut off he might one day be Earl of Stoneleigh.

And it actually came to pass. The second brother died childless. The eldest, the reigning earl, never got over the shock when his two sons were drowned together while yachting in the Mediterranean; and at sixty-six, when his unknown grandchild, Glyn, was learning French verbs and brilliant fantasies, the Honourable Charles actually found himself Earl of Stoneleigh, and master of twenty thousand a year!

He was a frank, outspoken old gentleman, and he told his lawyer plainly the change had come too late to give him any pleasure. His wife was dead, and of her eight children four had followed her to the silent land.

Only two sons and two daughters remained to enjoy their father's prosperity; and, to his dismay, Lord Stoneleigh soon discovered that he could do nothing for his girls or his younger son unless he lived long enough to save something out of his income.

Every penny that could be alienated from the estate had been settled by the late Earl on his widow.

The new peer would enjoy twenty thousand a year as long as he lived, but he was within four years of seventy; and whenever he died he would have to feel that he left his three best loved children in poverty, while his scapegrace eldest son inherited everything.

Clement, the new Viscount Ormond, was, alas! not a credit to the family. Coming after three girls, he had been spoilt from childhood. Then his handsome face and pleasant smile won him great popularity as a young man, and he plunged into society far beyond his means, got into debt, forged his father's name, which offence, though hushed up, yet leaked out sufficiently for his commanding officer to give him a hint to retire from the army, which he did; and marrying the daughter of a London cheesemonger, settled at Boulogne, to live on his wife's income, which was so tied up that even he could not trifle with the capital.

On coming into the title, Lord Stoneleigh made an allowance to his heir, and invited him and his wife to the family castle.

But alas! the new Lady Ormond was so utterly vulgar and uncouth that her husband's kindness could make nothing of her; and it was the poor Earl's only consolation that, as

Clem was forty and his wife ten years older, it did not seem likely that any grandchildren of the before-mentioned cheesemonger would arrive upon the scene to carry on the Higgins' relationship to another generation.

The eldest of Lord Stoneleigh's daughters, Lady Muriel Castleton, was a widow with one son, and she did the honours of the Castle, and brightened the last years of her father's life.

Blanche, her youngest sister, was married and in India; and George, the only surviving brother (except the scapegrace, Lord Ormond) was an old bachelor, who always declared that nothing would induce him to seek a wife. If, however, dissipation and imprudence carried off Clem, his sister Muriel had strong hopes of inducing her favourite George to marry for the sake of the family.

Meanwhile, at forty-two, he was the pleasantest and most genial of men, beloved by every tenant on the estate, and more like an elder brother than an uncle to Royal Castleton, who, Lady Muriel having married absurdly early, was actually only seven years his junior.

Two or three months before that May afternoon, when Mr. Cheviot intruded on Nan's solitude, there came bad news to Stoneleigh Castle. It had been expected for some time, but it was none the less a blow.

Lady Ormond, in a badly spelt and worse written letter, informed George Ormond that her husband was dying, and desired above all things to see him before he died.

"Of course I must go!" said George, promptly. "Poor fellow! I dare say there is some trouble on his mind. Martha has her own fortune, but I suppose I may tell him from you, father, we will look after her? She will be left terribly alone, poor thing!"

Lord Stoneleigh winced.

"Give him my love," he said, faintly; "and I would have come to him myself had I been younger. It is hard to see my children go before me! Of the eight, poor Clem will be the fifth to join his mother!"

"Shall I go with you, George?" asked Royal Castleton, who never called the uncle so near his own age by anything but his Christian name. "It seems a miserable sort of expedition to take alone!"

George agreed.

Royal Castleton was in the army; his grandfather making him a liberal allowance. His regiment was stationed within seven miles from the Castle, and there was little doubt he could get leave of absence.

Lady Muriel looked surprised when she heard of the arrangement; but her brother said, with a strange smile—

"I may be superstitious Muriel, but I hate the idea of going to Boulogne alone. I believe I should have tried to make you accompany me if Royal had not volunteered!"

A cloud seemed to settle on the Castle after they departed. Lord Stoneleigh said once of course George would marry when he was Lord Ormond, but he did not seem disposed to discuss the future.

Lady Muriel could hardly feel any regret for the prodigal, who, for nearly thirty years had been a disgrace to them. She thought George would make a far better master for the Castle, a more generous landlord, a nobler benefactor for the poor. She felt, too, he would take care of her boy's interests, and these were very near her heart. Little she guessed of what was to happen.

Lord Ormond was dying of an infectious fever. His foolish, grief-distracted wife forgot to warn his brother, and George went into the sick room weary with his long journey, faint from want of food, just in the state to fall a prey to disease. Before Clement died his brother was taken ill, and before Royal Castleton could make up his mind to telegraph for his mother, all was over.

"You will take care of my father and Muriel?" were the dying man's last words. "I wish with all my heart, my boy, you were the heir of Stoneleigh. But you will be

patient with that poor child, and try and bear with her kindly?"

Back again to Stoneleigh after the double funeral—back with his piteous story!

The Earl looked himself in the library, and would see no one. Captain Castleton and his mother held counsel in Lady Muriel's boudoir.

"I can't understand it, mother," said Royal, gravely. "I always understood the estate could descend in the female line. I should have thought that you would be Lady Ormond now, and in the future the Countess of Stoneleigh."

Lady Muriel shook her head.

"I wish for your sake, Royal, I was. The title will be extinct."

"Extinct? But you will take the property? Poor George in his last moments wandered strangely, and seemed to think some child he had never seen would be mistress of Stoneleigh. He asked me to be patient with her."

Lady Muriel's eyes filled.

"Then that is why he made up his mind never to marry. Why, he told my father just before he left us that even were he ten times Lord Ormond he should never seek a wife. He knew the truth."

"What truth?" asked Royal, gravely. "Mother, you are talking very strangely."

"My dear, I never troubled about money. I knew the property was entailed, and until last night I believed, like you, that after poor George I was my father's heiress, though I was aware the title would be extinct. I heard from Mr. Cheviot last night. After condoling with us on our loss he urged me to let him come down at once and see my father about his will, as Hector's daughter being now the heir-at-law, fresh arrangements were indispensable."

Royal started.

"Why, Uncle Hector died while I was at Oxford, and his wife died before that. I can remember the fuss there was when he married."

"But they left one child—a little girl, who was three years' old at the time of Hector's death. Mr. Cheviot says that she must be eighteen now, and that George, knowing how unlikely it was that Clement would live to come into the property, had repeatedly urged on Mr. Cheviot to make search for Hector's child."

"But he never said a word about it here?" objected Royal.

"It was a very painful subject. If you cast your thoughts back, Royal, you will admit that dear George never once spoke of himself as the probable heir of Stoneleigh. He always passed off such allusions. I believe myself that when we had got over the shock of Clement's death he would have urged my father to seek out Miss Ormond."

"Miss Ormond!" repeated Royal. "How strange it sounds! I have not heard of a 'Miss Ormond' since Aunt Blanche married twenty years ago. How old is our unknown heiress?"

"Eighteen."

Royal groaned.

"She's old enough to be 'keeping company' with some steady young shop-assistant. They settle early in that rank of life. Why in the world didn't my grandfather have her here years ago, and see that she was brought up decently? I suppose he knew Uncle Hector left a child?"

"He knew it at the time, but fifteen years ago, Royal, when Hector died, our fortunes were at low ebb. I don't believe my father could have stood the expense of a nursery establishment."

"And did 'Miss Ormond' go to the work-house?"

"According to Mr. Cheviot's letter (try and remember, Royal, I never even heard of my niece till last night), Hector insisted that the child should remain in the charge of her uncle and aunt, who had taken care of her since her mother died. He had insured his life for a thousand pounds, and this would repay Mr.

and Mrs. Browne for any expense she might cost them."

"Browne! What an awful name!"

"Don't make it worse than it is, Royal," said his mother, colouring. "I don't think myself we come very well out of the affair. I expect my father never mentioned the child in our days of poverty, because he could not afford to give her a home, and that later on he forgot all about her."

"You will have to refresh his memory now!" said Royal, shortly.

"I gave him Mr. Cheviot's letter. Royal, I don't like your way of taking this news. I never knew you mercenary before!"

"I am not," he said, gravely. "It isn't the money I think of; but just fancy this beautiful old place overrun by Brownes! What must the girl be like, when she has always lived amongst people my grandfather thought beneath his son? She'll be a modern edition of poor Lady Ormond—all the more aggressive because she's young."

Lady Muriel sighed.

"Remember George's last wish," she said, gravely. "For his sake be patient with the poor child. Remember, Royal, she is as near to my father as you are."

Mr. Cheviot came down the following week, but he brought very little reassuring news with him. Having consulted the company in which poor Hector's life was insured they told him the policy had been paid to a Mr. William Browne, as trustee and guardian of Glyn Ormond. He had reinvested it in certain railway securities, and no doubt his present address would be found in a list of shareholders of that company. Having diligently hunted up the list, Mr. Cheviot could affirm that Glyn's uncle lived at Albani Villa, Summer-road, Camberwell, and the probability was that his niece lived there with him.

Lord Stoneleigh listened gravely—then he announced his decision. He would make a will and secure his granddaughter's interests; but nothing would induce him to see her. He was not far off of eighty. His doctor confessed his days were nearly ended; he would not spoil the remnant of his life by introducing into his home a plebeian heiress. The girl was only eighteen; let her wait for her honours. He had waited long enough for his.

It was utterly impossible to move the old gentleman; and as, in his state of health, all excitement was dangerous, there was nothing for it but to give in.

Mr. Cheviot drew up the will, and confessed that, on the whole, it was a just one. Of the savings of the last ten years the Earl left a third to his two daughters, and the remaining third to Royal Castleton. He bequeathed a year's wages to all his servants, and pensions to the older ones. He left whatever articles she pleased to choose from the Castle furniture to Lady Muriel, and his signet ring to Royal. Finally, he appointed Mr. Cheviot trustee to his property, and Lady Muriel and her son joint guardians of his grandchild, Glyn Ormond; and it was his express desire that she should reside at the Castle under the protection of her aunt, Lady Muriel, until she married, or reached the age of twenty five. There was no occasion to tie up the property, for it was so strictly entailed that the most veritable spendthrift could not have made ducks or drakes of it, and it was hardly likely a girl of eighteen would have extravagant tastes.

Royal shrugged his shoulders.

"We must hope Miss Ormond will marry young, or you will have a terrible time of it, mother. I wonder you consented to take charge of her!"

"I might as well wonder why you agreed to be guardian, Royal—you, who hate all young ladies?"

"To tell you the truth, mother, I was thinking of poor George. I can't forget his last words were a prayer to me to be kind to this girl."

"Shall I tell you a secret, Mr. Castleton?" asked the lawyer gravely. "Mr. George Ormond was the only member of the family who ever saw his brother Hector's wife. He was only a young fellow, not much over twenty, when the wedding took place, and he went down to Southampton to see his brother off to India. I met him on his return, and asked him what he thought of Mrs. Hector. I have never forgotten his answer. 'I think she's worth it, if she costs him the friendship of every one he ever cared for. His name's a forbidden word at home, and my father has almost cursed him, but after seeing her I'm almost disposed to envy him!'"

"And George never cared for women!" said his sister.

"Well, Lady Muriel, may we not hope that whatever charmed two members of your family in Mrs. Hector Ormond may have descended to her daughter?"

The double blow did its work only too swiftly. Lord Stoneleigh never held up his head again after his son's death; and a fortnight before Mr. Cheviot's visit to Albani Villa he breathed his last, and his unknown grandchild was mistress of the Castle.

### CHAPTER III.

THERE was consternation in the schoolroom at Albani Villa—a long, dreary-looking apartment—on the left side of the door, somewhat smaller than the drawing-room, since there was a good-sized kitchen in the rear, while at the back of the brown holland glories was only the small parlour, called by courtesy the dining-room.

It was the invariable custom at Albani Villa to have two teas, one at six in the schoolroom for Miss Marshall and the children; another and heavier affair at seven in the dining-room, when the two elder girls and Mr. and Mrs. Browne enjoyed a quiet time together.

But the day after Mr. Cheviot's visit Mrs. Browne was amazed by the receipt of a telegram from her husband. The methodical man of business was not given to such needless extravagance, and Aunt Susan saw nothing in the message to warrant the shilling it must have cost.

"Dinner for three at six o'clock. Mr. Cheviot returns with me."

The mistress of Albani Villa was not best pleased. She was a hospitable woman, but she liked to reserve her hospitality for her friends, and Mr. Cheviot was a stranger. Then she rather resented the "dinner for three." Why could not the gentlemen have been content with a *tête à tête* repast, when she could have superintended things in the kitchen?

"You will have tea at five to-day, Miss Marshall," she said, rather sharply, "and Nan and Mary will take it with you. Then you had better all go for a long walk. Mr. Browne is bringing home a gentleman to talk business, and I should like the house quiet."

So a silence, almost like that of death, hung over the villa when Mr. Cheviot and his host reached it. The lawyer had accepted Mr. Browne's invitation, partly because the latter was evidently so busy when he called that it would have been simply impossible to have more than five minutes' talk with him, and partly because he wanted to see the heiress of Stoneleigh among her old surroundings before he transported her to her new home.

He was received in the drawing-room (the brown holland had vanished, to his great relief) by a stout, motherly-looking woman, in a brown silk dress, homely in appearance, and quite devoid, as her abode testified, of artistic tastes. Yet he liked her better than he had expected, because he found she was thoroughly genuine and kind-hearted.

"My dear Susan," said Mr. Browne, when he had introduced the guest, "Mr. Cheviot has brought strange news. Nan turns out to be an heiress, and we shall have to make up our minds to part with her!"

Mrs. Browne gasped. Her first remark

sounded disagreeable, but Mr. Cheviot forgave her, feeling there was justice in it.

"If anyone meant to leave the child a fortune, they might have troubled their heads a little about her all these years! Why, if we'd been the sort of people, we might have starved or neglected her, and her grand relations would have been none the wiser!"

After dinner, when everything had been explained to Aunt Susan, she showed herself in a more favourable light.

"I won't deny it's a good thing for the child," she said, slowly; "and Nan is a gentle sort of creature, not fit to shift for herself, or rough it. But if those grand relations of hers look down on her they'll just break her heart."

"I assure you Lady Muriel Castleton is kindness itself!"

"Perhaps!" said Mrs. Browne, doggedly. "But for all that, she'll not forget that Nan stands between her and twenty thousand a year. There's many a time I've not understood the child myself, and thought her ways unnatural. But I can say this, Mr. Cheviot, I've always treated her like one of my own, and if she's been reared plainly, she's never been made to feel she was unwelcome!"

"You see, Mr. Cheviot," put in his host, "it'll be a blow to us to give up the girl; but I suppose you'll want her to go to Stoneleigh pretty soon?"

"The sooner the better," said Aunt Susan. "When one's got to have a tooth drawn it's no good waiting to get used to the idea. Nan's been like a child of my own, but she's a great lady now, and her ways won't be ours."

"She's not much to look at," confessed her uncle. "If it had been our Polly now, she'd have been an heiress to be proud of!"

The lawyer felt, after he had seen Miss Browne, that he preferred things as they were. He was not prepared for the effect of his news upon the heiress herself.

"You can tell your friends, sir, that I don't want their money or their home," said Nan, defiantly. "I have an uncle and an aunt here who have been good to me all my life, and I don't want any new relatives."

"My dear," said the old man, gravely, "you have no choice in the matter. Your uncle will tell you that your grandfather had a perfect right to choose your guardian and your place of residence."

"Quite so," agreed Mr. Browne. "The fact is, Nan, you are a great lady now, and must live among grandees, not humble folks like us."

Nan shook her head.

"I would rather stay with you. What do I want with fine relations who will look down on me?"

"Let 'em," chuckled Mr. Browne. "Why, you're as good as they are, and a great deal richer!"

A troubled look came into the pale, wistful face as the girl turned to Mr. Cheviot.

"Is it quite true? Have I really no choice at all in the matter?"

"I am afraid not. My dear, do be reasonable. You will have everything you possibly can fancy, and I am sure Mr. and Mrs. Browne will let you come and see them from time to time, though I think the first visit ought not to be too soon. You ought to have a few months to give your new home a fair trial."

"That's true enough," said Aunt Susan. "Nan, I never like asking favours of rich people; but if you will be a good girl, and try and make yourself contented, I will write to this Lady Muriel myself, and ask her to let you spend Christmas with us!"

"Will you really, Aunt Susan?"

"Yes, I promise; and now, my dear, you had better go back to your cousins. Perhaps Mr. Cheviot will tell you first when he wants you to go to Stoneleigh Castle?"

"I shall be going down myself on Monday," said the lawyer, gravely, "and if Miss Ormond would come to us to-morrow my wife will be very pleased to receive her, and take care of her until we start for Stoneleigh. I think, Mrs.

Browne, we had better not give your niece any time to fret over the parting, and if she is with us for a few days she will be able to feel she has one friend at least in her new home. If you will bring her to Bedford Park yourself my wife will be delighted to make your acquaintance!"

He did not think it necessary to add that everyone at Stoneleigh Castle being in the deepest mourning Nan would require a black outfit, and that Mrs. Cheviot's taste would be more in harmony with Lady Muriel's than Aunt Susan's, but this was in his mind. Ten minutes later he took leave, and the heiress broke down and burst into tears.

She had chafed at the dulness of Albani Villa. Her soul had yearned after prettier surroundings, just as her mind had longed for something different to dwell upon; but, after all the Brownes were her own flesh and blood. She loved them dearly, and leaving them in this manner was a terrible wrench.

"Aunt Susan, please don't let me go!"

Mrs. Browne was secretly flattered at the prayer, but she was far too sensible to show her sympathy.

"Now, Nan," she said, sharply, "do be reasonable. Haven't you said over and over again that you hated Camberwell, and longed to see the world? Well, now you will see it, and you'll have beautiful dresses and furs, and a maid to wait on you, and as much new music as ever you like. It seems to me you ought to be very thankful for your good fortune!"

But the next day, at the pretty Queen Anne's house in Bedford Park, Nan having been taken to her own room to unpack, the two matrons had a confidential talk, at which Aunt Susan expressed herself very differently.

"That child is just meant for a fine lady, she's so fond of books and music; and try as I would I never could teach her to drive a good bargain. But if I thought that grand Lady Muriel would put upon her or scold her because she's the daughter of humbly-born Mary Browne, why I'd keep Nan with me if the Lord Chancellor himself came to ask for her!"

Mrs. Cheviot smiled. She was a gentle, sweet-faced woman, many years younger than her husband, and as she knew Muriel Castleton intimately she could reassure Nan's other aunt.

"Indeed, Mrs. Browne, you need have no fears. Miss Ormond will meet with the kindest reception. I only wish, for her own sake, she was not so great an heiress."

"Why," demanded Mrs. Browne, rather crossly, "why shouldn't Nan have plenty of money as well as other people?"

"She looks so childlike and innocent," said the lawyer's wife, "and she has twenty thousand a-year which no earthly power can deprive her of. If even she married a chimney sweep, she would keep her fortune. It seems to me a terrible position for a motherless girl of eighteen!"

"Well," said Aunt Susan, cheerfully, "I shouldn't think Lady Muriel would know any chimney-sweeps, and a girl's never the worse for a good husband. Of course it is an awful amount of money. William told me it was more than fifty pounds a-day; but then she need not spend more of it than she likes!"

The parting between Nan and her adopted mother was very matter-of-fact.

"I do hope you'll be a good girl and a credit to my bringing up!" said Mrs. Browne, kissing her niece; then, with a sudden softening, "and if you're not happy, Nan, come straight back to us; only I should like to see you hold your own as an earl's heiress should!"

She was gone!

Apart from the pang of feeling the last link with her old life was cut off, it was almost a relief.

Glyn Ormond loved her Aunt Susan dearly, but the evident importance she attached to money jarred on the girl sadly.

Kathleen Cheviot, with her sweet voice and

gentle ways, understood far better how to talk to Lord Stoneleigh's heiress.

"You know, my dear," said the lady, simply, "you have got to spend seven years with your Aunt Muriel, and it will be so much pleasanter for you both if you get on well together. Do try and like her, Glyn!"

"I don't expect she will like me," said Glyn, stolidly. "She will think I am stealing her daughter's place."

"Only she has none!"

"Oh!" and Mrs. Cheviot fancied Glyn was glad even before she added, "what a good thing. I never could get on with fashionable young ladies!"

"Lady Muriel has one son. Captain Castleton is your second guardian. I am very fond of Royal!"

"Is he married?"

"No; and he is stationed only eight miles from the Castle, so I daresay you will see a great deal of him."

The purchases were made the next day, and a very pleasant, well-recommended maid engaged to attend on the heiress.

Glyn was a puzzle to Mrs. Cheviot. She took not the slightest interest in anything bought for her, and grew paler and graver; and when the eventful Monday came she looked so ill and frightened that the lawyer told his wife he wished he had taken Lady Muriel to Albani Villa, and presented Glyn to her just as she was in her little grey dress.

"She was a pretty, taking child then; now she looks scared to death!"

Kathleen sighed.

"I hope it will come right in the end; but I'm afraid things will be very trying at first."

"I wish with all my heart Royal Castleton's regiment could be ordered abroad for two or three years."

"What good would that do?"

"Lady Muriel must cling to someone, and if her son were away she would have to cling to her niece. As it is, Royal will be constantly to and fro, and with his cool, sarcastic manner he will probably prevent the other two from ever getting to understand each other."

"I wish you wouldn't abuse Royal! I am very fond of him myself, and it's not quite his fault that he hates all young ladies!"

"Because he was jilted at twenty-five, by one of the most artful girls who ever breathed, is no reason he should believe all women heartless deceivers! I'm sure, with a mother like Lady Muriel, he ought to be a believer in the sex."

"Well, I like Royal!" protested Mrs. Cheviot; "and I believe if any girl once really touched his heart he would be very good to her. It's a pity there is no chance for Glyn, but he detests heiresses!"

"Besides, he is her guardian, and exactly twice her age!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

"REALLY, Royal, I think you might stretch a point to oblige me. As her guardian you ought to be here to receive Glyn!"

"And, mother mine, as a Captain in one of Her Majesty's regiments I assure you I ought to be attending to my professional duties!"

"Royal," and now there was an ominous shake in his mother's voice, "do you mean never to come to the Castle in future?"

Royal looked uncomfortable.

"It's better we should discuss the point, mother dear," he said, gently. "Stoneleigh has been like my home for years, but it can't be that any longer."

"Why not?"

Royal disregarded the question.

"Of course I shall come over to see you!" with a stress on the pronoun; "but as to dining here two or three times a week, and riding over to lunch, whenever I could make time, why, that's all over. I don't want Miss Ormond to complain of the frequent visits of her poor relations."

"Royal, I think you are too hard upon the

poor child; and, besides, you need not speak as though you were a pauper."

"Thanks to the dear old grandfather I am not that," he answered, smiling. "I believe I could retire and settle down for life on my income if I chose. If only you were not saddled with the heiress, mother, I would take a house near the barracks, and we would make a real home of it; but I suppose you must be faithful to your promise?"

"Of course!"

"My advice to you would be marry off Miss Ormond as soon as possible. If she has not already some family attachment at Camberwell I will try and find a deserving young man, who for the sake of twenty thousand a year and Stoneleigh Castle, will put up with a lack of h's, and a general homeliness of manner!"

"It is heartless of you, Royal, to talk in this manner, as though I would expose your cousin to be the prey of a fortune-hunter!"

"Well, mother, I think you will soon tire of your charge, and see that her marriage is your one chance of escape. Of course, I don't want her to be miserable, but there are plenty of good fellows nowadays who have to choose between dire poverty and marrying gold."

It was hopeless. Poor Lady Muriel had to give up her point. Royal rode away, and his mother busied herself with giving orders for Glyn's reception.

Not for Nan's. Nan, alas! had passed away with the old life at Camberwell. Miss Ormond of Stoneleigh Castle must be known by her baptismal name henceforth.

There were flowers everywhere. It was a lovely sunny day, and Lady Muriel herself gathered the blossoms for her niece's rooms. Then she wandered again and again from the bedroom to the pretty study, to make sure all was ready for the young stranger.

If she had known the dearth of beauty in Glyn's childhood's home she could not have spent more pains on her preparations, and they were eminently successful. The study, with its quiet, cool, grey carpet, and quaint Japanese furniture; the balcony filled with flowering plants, and a tint of colour given to the whole by the vivid crimson scarf, draped round the piano; the bedroom, in blue and white, simple as a girl's should be, and yet in perfect taste; the life-size portrait of Glyn's father in a recess its only picture.

"How I wish it was over!" thought poor Lady Muriel. "I think Kathleen Cheviot might have sent me a few lines to say how she got on with Glyn. It makes me feel afraid the girl is really dreadful, and Mrs. Cheviot did not like to tell me so."

She wore a black silk dress heavily trimmed with erape, a compromise between her usual cashmere and ordinary evening dress; for, if Miss Ormond proved very terrible, perhaps evening dress had better be abandoned for the first few nights until she was somewhat at her ease.

The train must have been punctual, for almost before the widow had begun to expect the carriage it dashed up to the door. Lady Muriel went into the hall to receive the guests. She was conscious of an entreating glance from the lawyer's dark eyes to herself as he half-led, half-dragged forward, a little figure, which seemed inclined to hide itself behind his portly frame.

"This is your niece, Lady Muriel! I think you will say with me, she will not be the less dear to us because of her resemblance to another Glyn Ormond, your sister!"

Lady Muriel took the cold hand in hers, and ascertained with difficulty that Glyn was not tired, and did not want any tea. She would rather go to her own room, and she did not wish to come down to dinner.

Then the lawyer interposed.

"You had better come down, my dear! I shall have to leave early in the morning, and I want to see you feeling at home before I say good-bye."

Lady Muriel left Glyn to the housekeeper's guidance, she was so anxious for a few words

with Mr. Cheviot before he went up to dress for dinner. Certainly she could not have believed anyone who had foretold what her first verdict of her niece would be.

"I feel as though the grave had given up its dead. She is Glyn's image!"

"And she has her gentle, sensitive, nature too!" said Mrs. Cheviot sadly. "Poor child, I fear her lot will be a thorny one. You won't be hard on her, Lady Muriel?"

"If? Why, I love her already, Mr. Cheviot; but why does she look so sad? Were those people at Camberwell unkind to her, poor, little thing?"

"They were kindness itself; but they never understood her. I fancy they thought her too grave, and were always trying to 'rouse her up.' Mrs. Browne's idea of a treat was to take her niece and daughter to see the shops in the Borough. She condemns flowers as rubbish, and turns her garden into a drying ground and poultry yard! I wish you could have seen that child's face when my wife took her into our conservatory. She had never seen a hothouse flower growing in her life!"

"And is she—educated?"

He smiled.

"Kathleen says her music is wonderful. I like her voice myself; it is so clear and sweet. She writes a very pretty hand, and has a peculiarly refined diction; but I don't suppose she ever opened a German book, and in general subjects she would be nowhere beside a high school pupil."

"I tried so hard to persuade Royal to stay to dinner."

"Then, my dear Lady Muriel, if you will excuse my saying so, you made a great mistake!"

"But, Mr. Cheviot, they must meet some day, and he is Glyn's guardian."

Mr. Cheviot smiled.

"You will admit your son is mortal, won't you?"

"Certainly—but—"

"Therefore," explained Mr. Cheviot, "he has his share of curiosity. Tell him nothing about his cousin. Avoid the subject most pointedly, and in a week or two he will be so anxious to know what she is like that he will propose the introduction of his own accord."

Mrs. Cheviot's maid had always dressed Glyn while she was at Bedford Park, and the attendant engaged by the lawyer's wife was Margaret's own sister; therefore she had, of course, heard something of Miss Ormond's history, and was greatly excited on this occasion of her home-coming, deciding in her own mind that if dress could do anything the heiress should win all hearts.

Perhaps she had had a hint from Mrs. Cheviot it was useless to apply to Glyn for instructions, for without a word she selected a black silk grenadine dress, rather heavily trimmed with jet; it was cut square in front, and finished off with a narrow ruche of white erape, as were the elbow sleeves.

Glyn's white throat and pretty dimpled arms gleamed like snow against the soft black grenadine, and her lovely auburn hair, raised high and coiled in one thick plait round her head, gave her a more dignified appearance than her usual style.

A jet necklace and bracelets, long black gloves, a small lace-trimmed handkerchief, and Miss Ormond's toilet was complete, but to the maid's horror her eyes were full of tears.

"Don't cry, miss," said the servant, eagerly. "It's a sad and dreary home-coming for you, but it's a beautiful home to come to, after all, and the friends you've left will be able to come and see you, and you'll be making new ones every day."

Glyn smiled.

"Nobody wants me here," she said, gently, and then without another word she went downstairs.

Dinner went off capitally, thanks to Mr. Cheviot's tact and cheerful conversation. He soon settled one point which had secretly exercised Lady Muriel's mind.

When they entered the dining-room there was a blank pause, and he saw that the widow really did not know where to place her niece, who, though but eighteen, was yet lady of the Castle.

"Miss Ormond," said the old man, pleasantly, "would you like to be very dignified and act as mistress of the house, or will you ask your aunt to do the honours for you, while you sit like a guest at the side of the table?"

"Oh, I will be a guest, please!" said Glyn, promptly. "I would very much rather."

"I am afraid you will miss your cousins!" said Lady Muriel, when she and Glyn were alone in the drawing-room. "Had you many, and were they all grown up?"

Which was a secret manner of discovering whether Mrs. Browne had a son of an age to be more than a cousin to Glyn.

The answer was reassuring. "I shall miss Mary most. She was nearest to me in age. Then the two boys were at school, and the other four girls were quite children."

Lady Muriel breathed again. "And I suppose you had finished lessons?"

"Yes. We left them off when Mary was seventeen. Aunt Susan said there were so many other things for us to learn; but I suppose I am very stupid; I never could learn them. Mary picked them up directly."

"What sort of things, my dear?"

"Oh! managing, and cutting out, and bargaining. I was so stupid that at last Mary and I agreed that I should do the needlework, and she should look after the rest."

"And are you fond of needlework?"

"I hate it. But it was quiet, and one did not have to talk!"

"But I suppose you went out visiting sometimes? Having lived in Camberwell so long your aunt must have a great many friends?"

"People came to tea sometimes," replied Glyn, "but we always knew a week beforehand. No one ever knocked at the door unexpectedly, because Aunt Susan said it was waste of time not to arrange things methodically. When Mr. Cheviot came I was at home alone, and I thought he had mistaken the house."

"It must have been very dull?"

"I used to think so. I have often longed to go away and try and earn my living by teaching music in London, just to see different things, but—when I knew I must leave Aunt Susan I would have given worlds to stay."

"I think I understand. But, Glyn, you must try and feel at home here, my dear! I have always wished for a daughter, and it will be a pleasure to me to try and make you happy."

Glyn shook her head. "I shall never be happy here."

"My dear child, why not?"

"Nobody wants me here," said Glyn, with a sort of choked sob. "Uncle said you would be ashamed of me, and that if it wasn't for me the Castle would be yours."

"My dear little girl, Mr. Browne was mistaken. I grant my father's neglect of you was enough to prejudice him; but, Glyn, until a few weeks ago I never even knew that my brother Hector had left a child; and so far from coveting the Castle I am quite content with the fortune my father left me. He made my boy independent, Glyn. That was all I wanted."

"How old is your son?" asked Glyn, quite forgetting Mrs. Cheviot's information about Royal.

"Nearly thirty-six."

"Oh!" and Glyn stared. "I hoped perhaps he was quite small. Little boys are so amusing."

"I hope you will be friends with Royal?" said his mother, gravely. "He is your guardian, Glyn."

Glyn shook her head.

"I don't like young men."

"I thought you said you did not know any?" replied her aunt.

"I don't. But Mary has met one or two when she went out with her mother, and she told me they were all conceited, and thought of nothing but their clothes."

Lady Muriel tried hard not to smile.

"I don't think Royal is conceited."

"Well, perhaps he has grown out of it. I remember how Mr. Cheviot told me he was a soldier; and perhaps if he is thirty-six he is not really like a young man at all," said Glyn, trying hard to be affable. "Is he like you?"

"He is like his father."

Glyn bent forward, and touched her aunt's hand.

"I ought not to have asked that," she said, penitently. "I forgot Mr. Castleton was dead."

"Remember my advice," was Mr. Cheviot's parting injunction to Lady Muriel. "Don't mention Miss Ormond to Royal. Don't send the young man piteous invitations to come and be introduced to her, and depend upon it before you expect it he will arrive on purpose to make acquaintance with his ward."

## CHAPTER V.

THE lawyer was right in one part of his prophecy, but decidedly out in the other.

Royal Castleton came over to see his mother after about a fortnight's interval, and he was duly introduced to his ward. But instead of being captivated by Glyn's fair, graceful self, instead of rejoicing with Lady Muriel that the grand old Castle had a mistress not unworthy of it, Captain Castleton maintained a stolid reserve about his ward.

He never betrayed the slightest interest in her. He shrugged his shoulders when his mother praised her, treating Glyn himself with a chilly politeness which she felt almost an insult.

"Aunt Muriel, why does Captain Castleton hate me so?" demanded the heiress of Stoneleigh, after one of Royal's brief visits, when he had refused his mother's pressing invitation to stay to dinner, and hardly spoken half-a-dozen words to his ward.

"My dear Glyn," said poor Lady Muriel, unconstrainedly, "don't take fancies. Royal unfortunately does not care for girls, but you must not think he hates you!"

Miss Ormond put down the roses she had been arranging, and looked full into her aunt's face.

"Do you know I have been here two months," she said, gravely, "and Captain Castleton has never broken bread with us? I was told, before I came, the Castle was a second home to him. Now he only plays the most formal calls. So either he must hate me, or he thinks me such a Hottentot that I do not know how to behave at meals. Which is it?"

Lady Muriel coloured.

"Glyn, my dear child, please do not talk like that. You don't know how you pain me."

"I sometimes think," said Glyn, gravely, "it is a great pity Mr. Cheviot ever came to Albany Villa. You and Captain Castleton would have been so happy here together, Aunt Muriel; and as I had never seen Stoneleigh could not have missed it."

"You would miss it now," said Lady Muriel, glad to change the subject. "Confess, Glyn, you like this old house better than Albany Villa, and that you are happy here?"

"I love the Castle," said Glyn, quietly, "but I am not happy. I feel so lonely."

"Would you like to ask two of your cousins on a visit, if you are tired of your old aunt?"

"No, thank you, aunt; they would have to go again. Don't you understand? I should be lonely anywhere. I don't belong to anyone. Even at Albany Villa I always felt somehow as though I were not one of them; and I feel it far worse here, because I know Captain Castleton hates me, and that because of me you hardly ever see him."

And some weeks later, in despair, Lady Muriel spoke seriously to Royal, and he listened patiently.

"You are making that poor child quite miserable, Roy. Do you think she cannot see how you avoid her?"

Royal shrugged his shoulders.

"She is a consummate coquette! Does she expect every man she meets to fall in love with her?"

"Royal!"

"Don't look so horrified, mother! You must confess my fair cousin has not made a bad use of her time. She has been here, I think, only three months, and already there are as many aspirants to her hand!"

Lady Muriel opened her eyes.

"I think you must be dreaming, Royal! Glyn is almost a child. She is not even 'out,' and she goes nowhere. How could she have lovers without my knowing it?"

"Perhaps you are a trifle blind, mother," said Royal, wickedly; "or perhaps you imagine the Duke of Netheriton drives over so often only to admire your flowers!"

"Royal, this is too ridiculous! The Duke is over forty, and a widower!"

"He is five years older than I am," replied Captain Castleton, "and it is notorious that his first marriage was forced on him by his father. He has been looking out for a duchess these last six months, and he intends to give Miss Ormond the first chance of the strawberry leaves."

"I am sure she has no idea of it!"

"He will give her the only thing she lacks—a title; and though you call me hard on the girl, I will confess she is beautiful enough—even for a duchess."

Lady Muriel had had time now to get used to the idea, and, to her son's surprise, she seemed to like it.

"I almost hope you are right, Royal. Glyn is such a child, she would never see it for herself; and I always looked on the Duke as a middle-aged man, but you are quicker-sighted, and I know Netheriton is a kind-hearted man. He was so good to that poor invalid wife of his!"

"Then you are contented to see your niece a duchess?"

"I think it would be a suitable match; but you said three aspirants, Royal! Who are the other two?"

"Oh, they will be nowhere beside the Duke! I should have thought you might have seen that Ainslie never takes his eyes off Miss Ormond, and that Leslie of ours is always making excuses to come over here!"

"Really, Royal!" replied Lady Muriel, and she was laughing in good earnest now. "You are too clever! As it happens, Mr. Ainslie is engaged to be married. He was telling me about it last week, and said 'she' was like Glyn. I didn't believe him, but of course I could hardly say so. As for Mr. Leslie, he is a mere boy!"

"Boys have hearts!" retorted Royal, "and he is pretty far gone, I assure you."

It was not the best moment for Glyn to appear. She looked prettier than she had ever done in the old days at Albany Villa. Her soft, white dress and broad black sash made her seem almost a child.

"I had no idea you were here," she said, offering her hand to her guardian.

"I daresay not."

"Where are you going, Glyn?" asked her aunt, seeing the basket on her arm.

"Through the wood. I want some dog-roses, and I know there are plenty the other side of the wood."

"I should have thought you had plenty of flowers here," said Royal, "and you will miss a visitor if you start now, for I can see the Duke of Netheriton's carriage coming up the Avenue."

"That settles it," said Glyn, smiling. "He is so insufferably proxy that he would send me to sleep on such a broiling afternoon. He talks of nothing but his house and pedigree, and I don't feel interested in either. Good-bye, aunt," and she tripped through the French windows into the grounds.

"Royal, you are mistaken!" said Lady

Muriel, quickly. "Neither of them think of love-making."

Royal looked inscrutable.

"Wait a few days before you triumph over me, mother! I'm inclined to agree with Miss Ormond on one point—the Duke is proxy—especially on a hot afternoon!"

His Grace of Netheriton looked anxiously round the room after he had shaken hands with Lady Muriel, and then, to Captain Castleton's sweet amusement, inquired for Miss Ormond.

"Glyn has gone out! No weather seems too warm for her."

"Much as I regret not meeting her," replied the Duke, "perhaps her absence is opportune. I have wished for some days, Lady Muriel, to speak to you of my hopes; and Castleton being also her guardian, it is as well, I suppose, that he should know my intentions. I admire Miss Ormond extremely, and I hope you will allow me to lay my coronet at her feet."

The Duke has gone.

Lady Muriel rather wondered her son still lingered. She had expected him to triumph over her surprise; but he said nothing after his Grace had left, and his face certainly did not look particularly exultant.

"He will come to-morrow, and propose," said Royal, at last, "and then, I suppose, the engagement need not be a long one. Get things over as quickly as you can, mother. I have such interested affairs."

"My dear boy, aren't you a little unfair? The Duke can't be called a fortune-hunter, and surely Glyn is not mercenary? Besides, she may refuse him."

"She won't! Well, mother, your troubles won't have lasted long. Do you remember the fairy pictures we used to draw of the heiress, and how I used to declare we must had some very needy gentleman to come and take her off your hands?"

"I don't think you were right, Royal."

"No. She turned out a beauty instead."

"How it rains!" said Lady Muriel, looking out of the window. "Glyn will be drenched."

"It is only a summer shower. She will take shelter under the trees."

"But the 'summer shower' proved a pitiless downpour, and with it came loud peals of thunder, frightening Lady Muriel almost to death, while the vivid flashes of lightning made even Royal look serious.

"There is no need to be so troubled, mother. There are plenty of places where she could take shelter."

"I feel sure she will be killed," said Lady Muriel, cheerfully. "If you did not hate her so, I should ask you to go and look for her."

After an hour's pitiless torrent the storm had spent its force, the rain had nearly ceased, and only an occasional distant rumbling remained of the thunder. Royal himself began to think Glyn should have been home sooner when the butler appeared, dismay on every feature.

"I think there must be something wrong with Miss Ormond, my lady. Hector's come back alone, and in such a taking; we can't pacify him."

Hector was a splendid collier, who, from the day of Glyn's coming to the Castle, had taken a passionate attachment for her. He was her companion in all her walks, and would never be induced to leave her side unless she herself ordered him.

It was just as the butler had said. Hector, instead of retiring to his own quarters in the stable, sat mournfully in the grand hall, growling if anyone attempted to dismiss him, and at intervals uttering the most mournful cries, as though grieving, in dog fashion, because no one seemed to understand him.

"Hector, old boy, what is it?" and Royal patted the silky head.

Hector's answer was prompt. He took hold of the captain's coat and tried to drag him towards the door. Then he thought owned on everyone—something had happened to Glyn,

and her faithful fourfooted friend had returned to get help for her.

Royal Castleton caught up his hat. He felt certain that Glyn had lost her way in the wood. He directed two of the men-servants to go in search of her in different directions, and he himself prepared to follow Hector, whose impatience was almost painful.

"Keep up your courage, mother!" he said, cheerfully. "I daresay she has only lost her way."

It was a weary pilgrimage; but Hector proved himself a trusty guide, and at last Royal came in sight of what at first looked like a little white heap by the side of a fallen tree. His heart almost stood still with fear as he asked himself whether the cruel lightning had struck her, and it was only her lifeless body he should have to take home to his mother?

He called on her in vain. Then, stooping down, he chafed her ice cold hands in his, and at last very slowly, very feebly, she opened her eyes.

"Are you better now?" And no one had ever heard his voice sound so tender.

But consciousness had not yet quite returned. Glyn looked at him with her beautiful greyeyes, but her spirit hovered still on the borderland.

"Please let me die. No one wants me here; and I am so tired."

"Nonsense!" And Royal raised her in a sitting posture, supporting her with one arm. "There is nothing the matter, really, little girl, only you were frightened at the thunder."

"And my foot feels on fire. But I am dying, really," she added, eagerly, "and you will be master of Stoneleigh. I am so glad."

Royal gave her a little shake.

"A nice opinion you must have of me, child, if you think I wish you dead just for that!"

"You always hated me," said Glyn. "You never once spoke kindly to me, though you were my guardian."

She was quite herself now, but she still kept those pleading eyes fixed on his face; and as for Royal, he knew now why he avoided her, and tried to dislike her. He knew it now alas! too well.

"I shall not be your guardian much longer," he said, quietly. "I haven't been a good one, Glyn, but you will have a better soon."

"Why? Are you going away?"

"No; but my guardianship will end when you marry."

She smiled half faintly.

"I shall never marry!"

"The Duke of Netherton hopes you will! He has been telling my mother this afternoon his great desire is to make you his Duchess!"

"That old man!"

"My dear little cousin, he is in the prime of life! Barely six years my senior!"

"He looks old enough to be your father! I would not marry him to save my life."

"Why not?"

Glyn shrugged her shoulders.

"I get tired of the Duke in half-an-hour, and marriage is for all time. You will never get rid of me like that, Captain Castleton. You will have to be my guardian for the whole time your grandfather said, until I am twenty-five, unless—"

"Unless what, Glyn?"

"Unless you would agree to accept Stoneleigh, and let me go away. If you would give me just a little money, two or three pounds a-week, it would be enough, and I should be so glad."

"Why don't you like the Castle?"

"I don't like robbing you. If I went away you might have Stoneleigh and be happy."

"I don't think I should be particularly happy—if you went away!"

"Why? You have always hated me!"

"I tried to!"

"And you succeeded. It seemed so hard that you should hate me when I had never done you any harm."

"And I suppose you hate me too."

"No," said Glyn, frankly. "I like you. I wanted us to be friends. Only you would not."

"Shall I tell you why?"

"I wish you would."

"Well, first answer me this. Why won't you marry the Duke of Netherton?"

"Because I don't like him."

"Well, Glyn, I can't be your friend because—I like you too much."

"Too much!"

"If only you had been poor," he whispered.

"If only it were not for Stoneleigh, and the twenty thousand a-year, I should have asked you to be my wife. Don't you understand, little girl, I love you, and I have seemed cruel and unkind only because I feared you would find it out, and laugh at my presumption."

"I am very tired," said Glyn, simply.

"Please, Royal, take me home!"

A long and dangerous illness followed that exposure to the storm. There were times when the doctors feared the young heiress of Stoneleigh would slip through their fingers, and in that time of anguish Royal forgot to guard his secret. He haunted the Castle while Glyn was in danger. He was her most constant visitor in the days of her convalescence; but not until she was really nearly well, and the doctors began to speak of a winter abroad to re-establish her health, did the cousins return to that conversation in the wood.

"I don't want to go away," said Glyn, feebly. "Royal, you are my guardian; don't let them take me to Italy."

"Sweetheart, will you let me go there too—as your husband? Glyn, my darling, love is stronger than pride. See, although you are an heiress, I dare to ask you to be my wife!"

Mrs. Browne duly invited her niece to spend Christmas at Albani Villa; and as she believed in settling things betimes, the invitation reached Stoneleigh Castle early in October. Lady Mariel replied, saying Glyn had been very ill, and was ordered to winter abroad for her health. Her wedding would take place early in November, and if Mr. and Mrs. Browne, and as many of their family as they could bring like to come to Stoneleigh for the ceremony, they would be very welcome.

Aunt Susan used to talk much of the glories of Stoneleigh after her return, and Mary thought her cousin a very lucky person to have such a handsome husband; while Mr. Browne, who had a great sense of the fitness of things, and who could never remember his niece's real name, declared old Lord Stoneleigh must have had this very result in view when he appointed Royal Castleton Nan's GUARDIAN!

[THE END.]

## AN EASTER COSTUME.

—o—

HILDA CLARE'S was certainly the prettiest costume in the church that Easter morning, and Hilda herself, in Tom Vernon's opinion, was as certainly the prettiest girl there.

Tall and slight and fair as a lily, she stood through the opening hymn in quietly graceful contrast to her short, stout and ruddy mother, her sallow, grey-haired father, and her restlessly fidgeting younger brothers.

Vari-coloured lights from the rose window across the aisle fell on her, fading the gold hidden in her red-brown hair, deepening the purple tones in her dark-grey eyes, warming the pure pallor of her cheeks, and bringing out silver gleams here and there about her dress.

To Mr. Vernon, in his masculine ignorance, this dress was only a fitting frame for his lady's fairness, and he thought not whether it had cost £5 or £50.

But Miss Smith, his mother's London guest, who was standing beside him and critically scanning all the toilets over her hymn-book, swiftly decided that it was the

handsomest and most perfect in the whole church.

It was of soft grey wool, brightened with a few artistic touches of silver embroidery. The little coronet bonnet to match was of fillets of grey velvet and silver-shot lace, between which, tenderly touching the girl's rich hair, nestled a wreath of Russian violets, looking as fresh and natural as the cluster of real flowers at her throat.

Nothing could have been more simple, dainty and springlike than was the whole effect.

The services went on. The prayers were long, the sermon longer.

Outside the sun beat with almost summer strength upon the southern windows; within, the sexton, consulting the calendar rather than the thermometer, piled coal on the stove.

Annie Smith knew that her face was unbecomingly flushed. She wished she had chosen anything but black lace and crimson tulle for her Easter bonnet, well though they set off her dark eyes and hair.

Her velvet bonnet-strings seemed chokingly hot, and she was unhappily sure that they were marking off in dingy streaks on her plump, white throat.

She felt that she and her metropolitan wardrobe were not appearing to advantage before these country folks.

The fortunate few who had brought fans plied them unceasingly. Choir and congregation, mingling music with the occasional discord of those who could not sing, but would sing, loudly assured each other that in Heaven reigned for ever "the blaze of perfect day."

Miss Smith's head began to throb.

And all the while Hilda Clare sat fall in sight, cool and fresh and distinguished-looking in her grey and silver; and Tom Vernon's frank eyes, when they rested on her, plainly told a tale to his mother's guest.

He had been all that is properly attentive to her as a guest. He had taken her on long drives over the downs; had done the honours of the neighbourhood and the few picturesque old fort buildings that the march of progress had spared to the bustling young city, and had been the most faithful and friendly of escorts to theatres and parties.

But if she had ever thought him more than friendly she had been forced to banish the fancy when Hilda Clare returned a few days before from a long visit to a cousin in Scotland.

Annie Smith had never yet spoken to Hilda, but Mrs. Vernon had pointed her out on the street.

"You'll like Hilda, I know," the cheery widow had said, with an almost proprietary pride and kindness. "She's so bright and sweet, and such a help to her mother with the boys! Makes all her own clothes, too—for they're anything but rich—and doesn't she look stylish? She'll call on you soon, for she's quite a friend of mine, if I am so much older. But I always did like young folks about me, and I feel as if Hilda somehow belonged to me, being such a near neighbour, and having no daughter of my own. And if I could really have her for my daughter—but there now! it's no use attempting to put such an idea into Tom's head, for the surest course to break a match is to try too hard to make it. But sometimes I hope things are settling that way. Tom has sense enough to look out for a real home-girl, and not a frivolous fashion-plate; though if she's handsome, too, why, of course, that's all the better," she ended, with a fine mingling of confidence in her son and knowledge of human nature.

Annie recalled this conversation as, after the benediction, the congregation slowly flowed out of church, making occasional eddies in the aisles where the inconsiderate stopped to talk to acquaintances, regardless of the delay they caused others.

She and Tom Vernon were among those thus delayed—some veteran members of the congregation having halted just outside their

pew-doors to exchange opinions, while the Clares family passed on down the other aisle.

Vernon's glance followed Hilda before he turned to Miss Smith.

"There goes a friend of mine I want you to know. You'll be sure to like Miss Clare, for—but I suppose my mother has sung her praises to you already."

Annie gave one of her piquantly emphatic nods.

"Oh, yes! She pointed her out to me yesterday when we were driving together, and I think I recognised her here this morning. Wasn't she that really lovely girl with brown hair, who sat nearly in front of us?"

Miss Smith was too wise ever to be slack in just praise of a rival. She had her reward in the betraying appreciation that rose instantly to Vernon's face.

"I couldn't help noticing," she ran on, before he could answer, "her and her dress. I must own that to see such a very smart frock and bonnet here did rather surprise me. Papa is always lecturing me for extravagance, but I never aspired to own a bonnet like that!" she concluded, with a candour admissible in a rich man's daughter.

They were on the verge of the crowd now, just leaving the vestibule for the sunny spring day without. Vernon's honest eyes looked perplexedly down at Miss Smith.

"You must have made a mistake. Hilda Clare sat in front of us, but she wore a very simple dress and a quiet little grey hat with a few violets in it. Her father could not possibly—"

He stopped there, for it was not for him to tell Miss Smith what Mr. Clare could or could not afford to give Hilda.

"Simple!" repeated Miss Smith, brightly. "Oh, the touching innocence of you men! Take a woman's word for it, that simple, girlish-looking costume of Miss Clare's was probably the costliest thing in church to-day. Her gown had a fit and finish such as only a high-priced French modiste can give, and those gleams of silver about it were real Egyptian embroideries in metal, at some five pounds a yard! And as for your 'quiet little hat,' it was an imported Paris bonnet. I can always tell the true touch. And what exquisite taste Miss Clare does have—as exquisite as her own face, and that is saying a good deal, isn't it?"

This time Mr. Vernon showed no pleased appreciation of his lady's praise. Instead, he fixed an almost frowning gaze on the gay Dresden china handle of Miss Smith's umbrella as he opened it for her.

He knew that Hilda's father, never too prosperous, was this year greatly embarrassed in business—was, indeed, deeply in debt.

It had only been through Tom's influence that the bank where he was both cashier and large stockholder had consented to renew Mr. Clare's notes again.

The old man's name was well known for honour and fair dealing; no one doubted his probity, but the times were hard, and money exceedingly scarce with most people.

And it was just in these times, when her father was already so heavily burdened, that Hilda appeared in this costly attire. It was worse than extravagant—it was cruel.

He could quite understand how she had been led into it. Her relatives in the north were wealthy. Doubtless their example and that of their friends had tempted her to vie with them in dress.

But he had never thought her capable of being swayed by such weak vanity. One of her charms for him had always been her tender consideration for her parents.

"A good daughter makes a good wife," his mother had once quoted to him, meaningly; and he had laughed at her matchmaking spirit, and thanked her with a kiss for her good-will, and so lightly put the matter by.

Then he himself had not known how much he cared for Hilda. His missing her in her absence, his joy at her return, had only lately taught him to read his own heart.

But what sort of a daughter was it who could take the money her grey-haired, care-worn father had so hardly earned—no, borrowed still more hardly—to thus lavish upon her adornment?

Wrapped in these gloomy meditations, Mr. Vernon walked on, mechanically answering the greetings of friends, and responding to Miss Smith's easy flow of chat almost at random.

As they turned into their own street, he desisted the Clares just in advance. Being a man, and young, and in love, at sight of Hilda he straightway began to excuse her to himself.

Very probably her father had not told her of his business troubles. He knew how often men keep such things from their wives and daughters through mistaken kindness, while the women spend all the money they can coax or tease out of the family purse-bearer, and, being given no reason why they should not, regard any unwonted refusal as miserly.

Then, when comes the crash which they in their ignorance may partly have hastened, the world blames them loudly, and lays it all to their wilful extravagance.

Hilda had seen Tom even before he saw her, and her face brightened with a silent welcome.

She was too proud to delay at his approach, but her mother always walked slowly, and she was sure he would soon overtake them.

She had scarcely met him since her return, but the guest in his home had, of course, claimed much of his time and attention.

Now she was innocently glad that she would meet him in a costume which in no way lost by comparison with even that of the girl from London.

There were some not altogether pleasant associations about her acquirement of that costume, but these were now swiftly effaced by the knowledge of how becoming it was to her, and the memory of the warm admiration in Tom Vernon's eyes when they had held hers for a heartbeat while the clergyman enlarged on the third head of his sermon.

But slowly as Mrs. Clare walked, the pace of the pair in the rear grew slower still. Miss Smith was tired, and her escort could not hasten on and leave her.

With the space between them gradually widening, the two parties pursued their course.

The Clares reached the Vernon gate—passed it. Now there was no longer any hope of a chance encounter; and Hilda went on, with her proud head held higher than ever, and a suspicious lump rising in her throat.

She was equally vexed with Tom and with herself.

Why should she care because he had not made an opportunity to speak to her on the way home, as he had so often done? And why should he not care to do it?

Meantime, on the Vernon porch, Miss Smith settled into a rustic seat to enjoy the cool stir of air, too soft to be called a breeze, that brought messages of perfume from the blossoming peach trees behind the house, and began leisurely drawing her long, black suede gloves from her white hands.

"I wish we could have caught up Miss Clare," she said, lifting luminous dark eyes to Tom. "I have taken a real fancy to her, and am impatient to meet her. So pretty and stylish and tasteful as she is, and yet so genuinely good! There are very few fashionable girls who would sit in church with a servant, and walk home beside her afterwards. Not but what she looks an extremely intelligent and superior person; but, then, most girls are so foolishly prejudiced."

"What on earth do you mean?" questioned Mr. Vernon, in blankest bewilderment. "There was no woman with Hilda but her mother."

"Her mother!" Miss Smith's face grew first horror-stricken, then dimpled with suppressed laughter, then, speedily defying suppression, rippled musically forth. "Oh, dear

me, what an awful mistake! But it was natural and funny, too. Don't you ever betray me, Mr. Vernon, for I do want her to like me; but—but I took Miss Clare's mother for her servant! You know, I've somehow happened never to meet her, and she doesn't look at all like her daughter, and she is dressed so—so—"

She paused, apparently from consideration, but the young man mentally finished her sentence.

The Vernon's house stood in its ample grounds on the corner of a street, and this corner the Clares had just turned on their way to their own home, which faced on the street beyond. They were still plainly in sight from the porch.

Even a man could note the contrast between the two ladies—Hilda fair, slender, fresh as spring, and elegant to the tips of her perfectly-fitting kid gloves; her mother plump and matronly, flushed and weary of aspect, and evidently uncomfortably warm in her winter-before-last wrap and bonnet.

Vernon's face looked stern. Ethel might not have been told of her father's business straits, but she could not help but know her mother's needs.

Mrs. Vernon had stayed at home that morning, having—it must be owned—a propensity to that convenient disease known as a Sunday headache.

She made her appearance at dinner, refreshed by a nap over a volume of sermons in the great sleepy-hollow chair behind the half closed blinds of the parlour bay window, from which on awakening she had comfortably scanned the returning church-goers.

"Mr. Clare's business must be looking up," she observed, in the course of conversation. "I was glad to see that Hilda was one of the best-dressed girls out to-day. Did you meet her, Annie?"

So even she had not noticed that costume, thought Tom, bitterly, while the chat rippled pleasantly on.

Three weeks went by. Hilda had duly called on Miss Smith, and her call had speedily been returned and repeated—quite a friendship having arisen between the two girls.

Annie, indeed, was frequent in praise of Hilda's charms and good taste; and Vernon, listening, could but realise more and more deeply the frank generosity of the one, and the cruelly selfish vanity of the other.

Hilda, too, had subtly changed to him, and, manlike, he did not understand that this was but the reflection of the change in himself.

Probably one of the gilded youth in the north had cut him out, he gloomily decided. A young lady of such elegant tastes as Hilda had developed would scarcely be content to settle down for life on a farm. And he certainly had no longer any intention of asking her to do so for his sake.

Then came a windy April evening, ominous of storm, when a tricky gust seized Vernon's hat as he entered his side gate, and sent it whirling across the yard, the centre of it a tiny cyclone of dust.

As he pursued and captured his stray property, he noticed an unenveloped letter blowing about with it, and caught that also.

Naturally supposing this was one of his own, he glanced at it to identify it by the failing light.

"I was glad to hear that the grey dress and bonnet made such a success."

These were the first words that met his eyes. Mystified, he involuntarily read on,—

"Now you see it was all right for you to please me by accepting them, you proud little cousin. Of course, no one in your town could possibly guess they were mine before they were yours."

With a swift suspicion that made his face flush hotly, Vernon stopped reading, and spread open the letter, which had been folded with the inner pages outward.

"Dear Cousin Hilda," it began, under the engraved heading of a fashionable street and number in Edinburgh.

So he had been reading one of Hilda Clare's letters, and had surprised her innocent secret—worse still, had been wronging her in his thoughts for weeks past.

Their yards joined at the back, and the letter had evidently been lost in one and blown into the other by the wind. There was nothing for him to do but return it at once, with proper apologies.

He had meant those apologies should as yet cover only the fact of his having seen the contents of the letter; but Hilda's grieved shame over this was intense.

"You read it?" she faltered, with crimson cheeks. "Oh, I don't blame you; I quite understand how it happened. But if only you had not! Now you must let me explain to you fully. Yes, you must! My Cousin Belle is only a little older than I, but she was married at eighteen, and her husband died suddenly last year. Of course, when she went into mourning, all her coloured things were useless, and she wanted to give me some of them then, but I didn't like to take them. We could always wear the same sizes, you see, even to gloves. And when I was visiting her she said I really must take that dreadful, horrid, detestable gown and bonnet for Easter; and they were so lovely, and I couldn't bear to ask father for any money at all this spring, for he has been so worried with business, and everything I had was so hopelessly shabby. And Belle was so kind about it, and she had bought them in Paris and only worn them once, and—and so I took them! And though, of course, there really wasn't anything wrong in it, I didn't want people to know. But I would rather any one—any one—but you had learned the truth of it!"

And fearing lest she had revealed too much in this last sentence, Hilda sank into the nearest chair, buried her face in both hands, and helplessly yielded to the tears against which she had been struggling throughout her explanation, and the sight of which pierced Mr. Vernon with still keener remorse.

"I am the very person that ought to have learned the truth of it," he exclaimed, impatiently, flinging himself on his knees beside her. "But I'm afraid it's too late, and you never will forgive me for the outrageous lies I've been telling myself about you, though I loved you even while I believed them."

Then, as she looked up in surprise, he, too, explained fully.

She forgave him—more, she finished her fit of tears with her head on his shoulder, and he found the task of consolation a most delightful one.

Annie Smith's friendship for her did not cool when the engagement was announced, but she very soon after found that her family could no longer spare her from home, and so went back to London. And the bill for Hilda's next Easter costume was made out to Mrs. Tom Vernon.

## FACETIE.

A DESIGNING knave—A poor architect.

THE strongest butter in the tub is always the weakest in the market.

Mrs. GRUNDY says that the supply of pretty type-writers is much larger than the demand.

EVEN the quietest weddings celebrated by the ringing of a bell.

A MAN never sings his tenth baby to sleep. Neither does he wake it up to see it laugh.

ONE may pity the unfortunate from the bottom of the soul, and yet not have even the top of the wallet affected.

"Is your wife of a sunny disposition?"

"Yes, she makes it pretty warm for me sometimes."

MISTRESS: "Didn't the macaroni come from the grocer's, Bridget?" Bridget: "Yis, mum, but Of sint it back. Every wan av thim atims was impty."

THE man who has never made a fool of himself doesn't know much about the value of human sympathy.

"Who is that?" asked McCorkle, indicating McCrackle's type-writer and secretary. "That is my recording angel."

"Why do they call them fountain pens?"

"Oh, I suppose, because they are for ever overflowing."

IT is one of the easiest things in the world to economically lay out the money you never will have.

PORTION of Scripture quoted by a Chicago divine as he looked about him at a full-dress party: "Low—and behold!"

CORNER: "What do you intend to take for your cold?" Rollins: "Oh, I'll sell it cheap. Anything you'll give."

IN the Japanese language there is no word for kiss; but the Japanese lover gets there just the same.

THE man who sighed for the lost dreams of his boyhood could likely bring them back by eating one of his boyhood suppers.

"You have my heartfelt thanks," as the patient said when the doctor had finished sounding that organ.

DRESS like a tramp and your friends will overlook you, but a policeman will look you over.

BAGLEY: "Nice, pleasant day, Bailey?" Bailey: "Yes, here it is, but I tell you it's cold down at my house."

IT takes all the enjoyment out of a game of tennis to hear it called "an amusement within the reach of the feeblest intellect."

"It don't pay to be kind to pets," said Johnny. "I filled the gold fish globe up with milk one day, and the fish all died."

"MISS PARNER has grown old rapidly in the last six months." "No; not exactly that. She has caught up with her age, that's all."

MIX: "Why do them false eyes be made of glass, now?" Pat: "Shure, an' how else could they say throo 'em, ye thinkhead."

DAMP sheets are the terror of everybody except the editor, who likes to have a sheet brought damp from the press.

WATCH the hand that puts you on the back. Nine times out of ten it will afterwards grope its way into your pockets.

"I'm on to you," said the drop of ink to the blotter, in a tone of considerable asperity. "Dry up," replied the blotter, savagely.

GOLDBACH (looking out at the tenements): "Alas! it must be very hard to be poor."

Wentman: "On the contrary, it's a confoundedly easy to be poor."

"My doctor has forbidden me to take wine, and he says I ought not to smoke either." "Then, if I were you, I would change my doctor."

A YOUNG lady who was shown the bright planet Venus through the telescope, said: "Oh, isn't it lovely? Now please show me Adonis!"

"BRONSON call his wife a 'perfect poem.' I think she's a termagant." "Well, that's what Bronson means. She is not easily composed."

IT is an exploded theory that the average boy can eat enough angel cake to make him angelic. It seems rather to produce the opposite effect.

EMMA: "I rode in a tram-car half-an-hour to-day before I got a seat." Amy: "That's too bad. It's such a misfortune not to be good-looking."

A SCANDALMONGER is a person who talks to our neighbors about us. An entertaining talker is a person who tells us mean stories about our neighbors.

A SMALL girl of three years suddenly burst out crying at the dinner table. "Why, Mabel," said her mother, "what is the matter?" "Oh, whined Mabel, "my teeth trod on my tongue."

HOW can make the point of a needle look as big as a dinner-plate; but when we run against it we experience the sharpness of disappointment.

IT has been averred that a lady with a diamond ring will scratch her nose, in a given period, four times as often as any other woman.

CORNER: "How seldom it happens that we find editors bred to the business." CORNER: "Just as often as we find the business bread to the editors."

THE man who howls loudest about the "equality of man" is invariably the man who is most firmly convinced that the world contains no one equal to himself.

DYSPEPSIA and disappointment in love seem to produce the same outward effect. The difference between them is that the dyspepsia is rather hard to cure.

SEEN by the card: At a school-examination. "Tell me something about David." "David was a king, sir." "Quite right. Butting of what?" "Of clubs, sir."

"THE breath of spring is in the air," says a daily paper. If that is so, spring had better take something for a bad breath, adds the Commercial Bulletin.

"I SEE some fellow has invented a button-less shirt." "That's nothing new. I've worn them ever since my wife took to reading Browning."

"CAN't you employ me, sir?" asked the tramp. "I have nothing for you to do," returned the householder. "That's just the thing I can do, sir," said the tramp.

MCCORKLE: "Noah's family was not an aristocratic one." McCrackle (tentatively): "No?" McCorkle: "No; they were not in the swim."

LITTLE Girl (in church): "Why does so many people put these little envelopes on the contribution plate?" Little Boy: "Thems to keep the pennies from making so much noise."

A SNAP SHOT.—Maud: "George, please explain what you meant by telling Edith my eyes reminded you of a cat's." George: "Why, simply, that to appreciate their beauty one must see them at night."

A NEWSPAPER paragraph advertises a "celebrated kid glove" by the name of "Josephine." This is very unhistorical. Poor Josephine owed her divorce from the benefactor of his species to the misfortune of being kidless.

MR. TOUTHEART (the corpulent stockbroker, proposing the health of the ladies in a voice husky with whiskey—no emotion): "What—I say—hic—where would man be without woman?" De Grump: "In paradise."

JOHNNIE: "Papa was examined again yesterday." Tommy: "By the doctor? I didn't know he was sick." Johnnie: "He is sick, but he was not examined by the doctor. It was the grand jury."

A NEW ZEALAND chief had taken up his residence upon a piece of land, his rights to which was contested. "I have an undeniable title to the property," he observed, "as I ate the preceding owner!"

"YOU'd better ask for manners than money," said a man to a poor boy who asked for assistance. "I asked for what I thought you had the most of," innocently replied the boy.

SHE: "I know he isn't a pedigree dog, but no tramp or beggar can come near the house without his letting us know it." He: "What does he do? Bark?" She: "No; he crawls under the sofa."

"I HAVE noticed," said a young solicitor, "that members of the legal profession are almost always brave men. It is seldom that one shows cowardice. I wonder why that is so?" "Well, responded an elderly lady, "I've read somewhere that 'conscience makes cowards of us all.' And as lawyers mostly have no conscience, why, of course, they haven't anything to make them cowards."

## SOCIETY.

PINK and black is one of the fashionable combinations for dresses and half-dress occasions.

The Duke of Edinburgh is working energetically at his naval duties, and the people of Devonport admire and like his Royal Highness.

A PARADE beauty is said to keep her hands white by always using the half of a lemon in washing her hands, exactly as she would a piece of soap.

A "FAD" this season at ladies' luncheons has been the proposition of a toast by the hostess, and the surprising of one of her friends by requesting her to respond to it.

The latest freak of the German Emperor before setting out on his travels was to bring up a torpedo boat to Potsdam, and manoeuvre her in person on the Spree, in the presence of an enormous crowd of much-astonished spectators.

The German Emperor will, it is expected, arrive in London during the last week in June, and will stay at Buckingham Palace. Later, His Majesty will probably make a stay of about a week at Windsor, and it so will be present at the Royal wedding. There will, of course, be brilliant doings in his honour.

KING ORNO OF BAVARIA is slowly approaching his end. The mental infirmity from which he has suffered for years has now entered its final stage; the brain is softening; and the patient is so hopelessly bedridden as to render the recovery of bodily powers absolutely impossible.

The best-dressed woman in the world is said to be Queen Margherita of Italy. Her wardrobe includes a countless variety of elegant costumes, and she seldom wears a dress more than once. Like the thrifty woman that she is, she sells her scarcely worn costumes; and the buyers are very glad to get them, even at the high prices which are charged for them.

There is a rumour that diamonds are becoming cheap, perhaps on account of the quantity turning up in South Africa, and the superb imitations being fabricated in Europe. Some people consider it more distinguished to wear a whole heap of coloured stones instead, the blazing ruby or a vast turquoise being most appreciated.

In order to suit certain Court arrangements, the wedding of Prince Arbert of Anhalt-Dessau and Princess Louise of Schleswig-Holstein will take place a day or two earlier than was originally settled, and the day now fixed by the Queen for the ceremony is Monday, the 6th of July. The "acrimonious" which was observed at the marriage of the late Duke of Albany is to be followed as closely as possible.

The Emperor Frederick bequeathed a considerable portion of the immense fortune which was left to him by the Emperor William to three trustees—the Queen, the King of the Belgians, and the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—and they were directed to invest the money in British securities. The Emperor Frederick has a life interest in the fund, which, after his death, will be divided among her younger children.

The Prince of Wales as well as the Princess take a great interest in carrier pigeons. They have some at Sandringham, which have from time to time carried messages long distances. The Princess is fond of taming live owls, and the place is full of pets, some of which are pigeons. It is therefore, easily understood that this kind-hearted, gentle, Royal lady would strongly disapprove of a sport like pigeon-shooting, which is so cruel to these pretty, harmless birds. The Princess has not herself strongly against this unsportsmanlike practice, and is always grieved that it should be taken up as a society pastime.

## STATISTICS.

There are always 20,000 strangers sight-seeing in London.

The average height of Laplanders is under five feet.

Over one tenth of the United States people are blacks or Chinese.

Fifty-four bodies were cremated in England last year.

It costs nearly five shillings to run a London and North-Western Railway express train one mile.

## GEMS.

Strength of mind, as well as physical force, is chiefly to be acquired by exercise and habit.

The world will be nearer right when a man has learned to laugh a little less at his neighbour's troubles, and a little more at his own.

The man who spends his life in "getting even" for real or supposed injuries, is a torment to himself, and generally a bore to his friends.

The heart will commonly govern the head; and it is certain that any strong passion, set the wrong way, will always infatuate the wisest of men; therefore, the first part of wisdom is to watch the affections.

The years do little for us if they do not teach us modesty, if they do not convince us how little we really know of humanity, of its desires and temptations, its motives and sources of action, if they do not show us that "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out."

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SCONES.—Carbonate of ammonia is used instead of carbonate of soda in baking scones; it is not nearly so good, and is apt to leave a taste behind unless carefully measured. It is used in the same way as carbonate of soda.

HOW TO COOK PRUNES.—Wash in cold water, then put them to soak in cold water, letting them remain all night; put them into cold water for the third time and boil them gently, adding sugar to suit your taste. Very little cooking is needed.

PICCALILLY.—One pound ginger, one pound garlic, one pound black pepper, one pound mustard seed, three-quarters ounce turmeric, a little cayenne pepper, one quart vinegar. Take the ginger and let it lie in salt and water one night, then cut in thin slices; divide the garlic and salt it three days, then wash and dry it on a sieve; bruise the turmeric very fine, and put it and the mustard and pepper and cayenne in a jar, with the vinegar boiled and poured over them, then put in the ginger and all the other things. Let it stand for a fortnight. Let the jar be quite full, and stop it down. In six weeks it will be ready for use.

TO PREVENT MOTHS.—Plenty of fresh air let into all corners. Nothing should be put away in boxes or drawers dirty. Moths gather in woollen articles put past dirty. Turn the drawers and closets over often, and shake out everything, and wash shelves to keep down dust. Furs should be thoroughly beaten, then rolled up in brown paper, or kept in a box or drawer where the parent moth cannot enter. Any strong smelling thing, like camphor, or wood-ruff, or lavender, put in closets and drawers prevents the moth entering, and many people sprinkle pepper round edges of carpets if the house is to be shut up. But there is nothing like turning things over and cupboard over. A good housewife looks over every part of the house once a week.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

Opium eaters rarely live more than thirty-five years.

The natives of Ceylon call their island Sing-hale.

Suicide is less prevalent in Ireland than in any other country in the world.

Nihilism, as it at present exists in Russia, came into existence in 1862.

When horses are trotting, only two of their feet are on the ground at the same time.

Some insects are born, grow old, and die in the space of twenty-four hours.

A Bank of England note for 10, was by mistake issued in 1727, and was for some time in circulation.

There are more words in English than in the French, Italian, and Spanish languages all put together.

A lady has started an estate agency, and will undertake to collect rents, make out agreements and inventories, and do the usual work which appertains to the profession.

AUTOGRAPH hunting is a thing of the past. Like all manias it had its run, and it has now been dropped for another fad. Public men are asked to give their ideas on marriage, religion, politics, and other subjects.

WOOLLEN cloth was first made in England in the year 1331, though it was known in Oriental countries since time out of memory; it was neither dyed nor dressed in England until the year 1667.

The law of evolution works in language as well as in other things. Twenty thousand words have been added to the English language in the department of biology alone since Darwin's discoveries.

Last year the male staff of the Post Office Savings Bank worked overtime to the extent of about 268,000 hours. Lord Compton has come to the conclusion that this overtime would represent the labours at ordinary hours of a staff of 129 clerks.

There is a serious split among "Volapukists," and each side ignores the writing and proceedings of the other. In the meantime "the cause" suffers. There were once twenty journals in Europe and America in the Volapuk interest, but the majority of these have ceased to appear.

The term "fixed," applied to the stars, is a mistake, for it is now known that there is not a fixed star in the heavens, and, probably, no such condition as absolute rest in the universe. All the stars are in motion, and some of them, are moving at the rate of 250,000 miles an hour, or more than twice the velocity of our earth in its orbit.

In the hottest climates the animals are found most to approach man, and these in such great zoological divisions possess the organisation the most complex and the faculties most developed; while in the polar regions are found only beings occupying a rank but little elevated in the zoological series.

The King of Siam celebrated the 148th anniversary of one of his elephants the other day, and the animal was as coltish as some of the herd only fifteen years old. This is the oldest elephant with any authentic record of his age, and the only sign of decay appear in his ears. He can't stop them quite so briskly as of yore.

THE KHEDIVÉ'S WIFE.—The household of the Khedive of Egypt is a happy one, for the Khedive is a sensible, kind-hearted man, very popular with his people, and very fond of his wife. She was the granddaughter of an ex-Sultan of Turkey, and, it is whispered, holds the matrimonial reins rather tightly, and keeps so sharp an eye upon her husband that he has never taken a second wife, although the law provides that he or any other man may have four lawful wives.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**ONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.**—No, it is not necessary, as long as one of the witnesses still lives.

**A GREAT READER.**—We have not seen any announcement of the periodical you refer to.

**LITIGATE.**—Local Boards of Health are worked under the Public Health Act of 1875.

**ROMANTIC ROSE.**—The girl need not marry the man unless she wishes to do so.

**C. A. D.**—A child over thirteen, having passed the fourth standard, can be employed full time.

**MARY MORRISON.**—The Great Duke of Wellington was of Irish nationality.

**A COCKNEY.**—Bilston is a market town (and parish), and in the county of Stafford.

**RIGHT IS RIGHT.**—Twelve years' undisputed possession of property gives a good holding title.

**IRON.**—Meriden, in Warwickshire, is said to be about the central point of England.

**A DOG-LOVER.**—1. St. Broadway, Westminster. 2. The dog is entitled to his first bite free.

**ALIAS.**—Yes, it is illegal to marry under an assumed name.

**F. H. C.**—Charities are governed by the Charitable Trusts Acts of 1853, 1869, and 1887.

**W. HARRIS.**—We do not know of any collection of Scotch poems, but the poems by Robert Burns can be had of any good English bookseller.

**JOHN HIGHLANDMAN.**—Cameron Highlanders wear a kilt of Cameron tartan, and are otherwise dressed like the rest of the kilted regiments.

**DISMAYED TENANT.**—Six months' notice must be given to expire on the quarter-day corresponding to the date of entry.

**IN DOUBT.**—Two penny pieces are still coined to be used as Maundy, or poor man's money, by the Church of England.

**A LONE WIDY.**—The mother is not obliged to provide a grown-up son with a home if he can work and will not.

**ALFANGAR.**—Treaties on behalf of the colonies must be made through the Imperial Government, and ratified by the Queen.

**PUBLICAN.**—Debts incurred for intoxicating liquors consumed on the premises cannot be recovered through the county court.

**BETTER SWEET.**—Yes, letter should be stamped with date on which it passes out of London office. It will be in a "returned letter" envelope.

**SIMON TAFFERTILL.**—A youth may be apprenticed at any age up to twenty-one years, when he is free to act for himself.

**SCIENCE.**—The explanation would be two long here; but any scientific friend will explain the matter to you in a few minutes' talk.

**KIT.**—A man can be called upon to contribute to the support of his son's children if they become chargeable to the parish.

**OLIVER.**—If it is a private club, held in private premises, you may do as you please about playing billiards for cigars.

**A TENANT.**—To raise the rent, a landlord must first give the legal notice to quit, the rise to date from the expiration of the notice.

**ANXIOUSLY WAITING.**—Your brother would leave Brixton in the *Supercat*, which sailed on 6th February. The vessel should be at Portsmouth immediately.

**FRANKIE.**—German and English pianos have each their good points. We cannot say generally that one maker is always better than another.

**IN A FIX.**—The owner of the fence is required to keep it in repair. The owner of the dog is required to prevent the dog straying on his neighbour's property.

**HIGHLANDER.**—If a man has two years' service in a Highland regiment, then deserts and returns in three years he does not lose his two years' service.

**LAW.**—It has been held that a six-days' Homeless entitles the Homeless to sell on Good Friday or Christmas Day (not being Sunday) during legal hours.

**MABELLE.**—You can change your name, if you like, giving notice by advertisement; or the change may be effected by Royal License, or by a deed in Chancery.

**FERNALDA.**—Warwickshire wills are proved at the Probate Registry, Old-square, Birmingham. Fee for inspecting a will, one shilling.

**WREATHFUL.**—If you can prove that your wife has been guilty of such misconduct as you describe she has no further claim on you.

**R. R. B.**—The tenant has no right to remove or to injure any building fixed in the ground; if he does so, the landlord can sue him for compensation.

**I. O. U.**—If a debt has not in any way been acknowledged for a period of not less than six years, the Statute of Limitations constitutes a bar to its recovery.

**A CONSTANT READER.**—The duties of a nursery governess are so varied that it is quite impossible to describe them. They depend very much on what sort of a family you get into.

**GIDDY-PAT.**—No length of absence on the part of a husband legalises a second marriage, but after seven years a woman would not be punished for bigamy.

**TAXATION.**—If you mean income-tax, that is not paid on incomes below £150 a year, but inhabited house duty is payable on all houses of £20 and upwards.

**ROLF.**—You had better appear in answer to the summons, and state your case to the county court judge, who will probably order payment by instalments.

**ANXIOUS TO KNOW.**—Men are plentiful just now. Your success would depend a good deal on your personal appearance. A strong, healthy, active fellow is readily taken.

**AMBITION.**—You are just four years too old for the navy, except you intend to enter as an engine-room artificer, and for that you must have both theoretical and practical skill.

**ROMANCE.**—If a wife chooses to leave her husband without cause he is not bound to maintain her, but there are practically no means by which he can compel her to return.

**H. C. B.**—The practice of eating hot-cross buns on Good Friday is believed to be the survival of an ancient pagan custom of worshipping the Queen of Heaven with cakes.

**A SWINDLER.**—If you agreed to purchase the ring on conditions which have not been justified you need not keep it. You may be able to show that the £4. was obtained by false representations.

## ANY SOUL TO ANY BODY.

So we must part, my body, you and I,  
Who've spent so many pleasant years together.

'Tis sorry work to lose your company,  
Who clove to me so close, whatever the weather,

From winter unto winter, wet or dry;  
But you have reached the limit of your tether,

And I must journey on my way alone,  
And leave you quietly beneath a stone.

They say you were altogether bad—

Forgive me, 'tis not my experience—

And think me very wicked to be sad

At leaving you, a clod, a prison, whence

To get quite free I should be very glad.

Perhaps I may be so a few days hence;

But now, methinks, 'twere graceless not to spend

A tear or two on my departing friend.

Now our long partnership is near completed,

And I look back upon its history;

I greatly fear I have not always treated

You with the honesty you showed to me.

And I must own that you have oft defeated

Unworthy schemes by your sincerity,

And by a blush, or stammering tongue, have tried

To make me think again before I lied.

'Tis true you're not so handsome as you were,

But that's not your fault, and is partly mine.

You might have lasted longer with more care,

And still looked something like your first design.

And even now, with all your wear and tear,

'Tis pitiful to think I must resign

You to the friendless grave, the patient pray

Of all the hungry legions of doasy.

But you must stay, dear body, and I go,

And I was once so very proud of you;

You made my mother's eyes to overflow

When first she saw you, wonderful and new.

And now, with all your faults, 'twere hard to find

A slave more willing or a friend more true.

Ay—even they who say the worst about you

Can scarcely tell what I shall do without you.

C. M.

**PATRIOT.**—The census is always taken on the first Sunday in April. In 1881 this was April 5. Probably the *Times* of about that date would give you all the information you desire.

**IN DIFFICULTY.**—Your question is obscure. You are not required to pay for a lawyer's letter demanding payment of a debt, but if the costs were imposed by the Court you must pay them.

**INQUIRER.**—There is no dripping aisle in Glasgow Cathedral, but there is one so-called in Paisley Abbey; the sound of a steady drip was heard there constantly. Not aware that it was ever satisfactorily accounted for.

**A SAILOR'S DARNING.**—473 lives were lost by the foundering of H.M.S. *Captain off Finisterre* on 7th September, 1870. Eighteen men were saved. The vessel booted over in a squall while at anchor, and sank in three minutes.

**ANXIOUS MOTHER.**—The *Himalaya* arrived at Hong Kong about February 8, and we imagine is now on her homeward voyage, though not yet reported that we have seen. Should think she would reach England before the end of this month.

**A SOLDIER'S LOVE.**—1. Life Guards are at Regent's-park, London. 2. Term of service is 12 years in Life Guards. 3. A Life Guardsman may marry when he likes. 4. Corporal's pay is £4. 8s. a day. 5. Next step beyond corporal is corporal-major.

**MIRANDA.**—Proceedings cannot be taken in a police-court for slander; but, if damage can be proved, an action may be brought in a superior court, and compensation recovered. Proceedings must be conducted by a lawyer.

**R. L. L.**—If the son left no will his interest in the legacy would pass to his next-of-kin, who in this case would be the father. 3. All London wills are proved at Somerset House. They may be seen on application, and copies may be obtained, the cost of which will depend upon the length.

**NOVELTY.**—Ashes of olives have a practical value as a dentifrice, also for cleaning plate, which naturally argues a commercial value; but we have never known them to be bought or sold, and could not say where you would find a buyer. A working jeweller or a watch-maker might treat with you for your ashes.

**A WIDOWER.**—1. A second marriage invalidates a will made after a first marriage. 2. If no subsequent will is made, the estate is considered to have died intestate. 3. In that case the widow takes one-third of the personal estate, and the remainder is shared equally by the children.

**BENEDICT.**—The cost of a marriage by license before a registrar, including certificate, is £3 17s. 1d. The license will be issued one clear day after the entry of the notice of marriage, but one or other of the contracting parties must have been residing in the district at least fifteen days immediately preceding.

**PORTA.**—"Poets are born, not made." Except you have the gift of poetry, no book will teach you how to translate your thoughts into words. A rhyming dictionary will certainly teach you how to "clink" lines, but that is a different matter. No live poet could tell you his method. He does not know that he has one.

**FAVELLA.**—In nine cases out of ten, the failure of a letter or package to reach its destination is due to the carelessness of the sender. Tons, actually tons, of mail matter is dumped into the dead-letter office because people will not learn to write decently or will not take the time to do it.

**R. P.**—The reason why wool and woollen goods felt and solidify more readily than the straight-furled furs is owing to the natural curl or frizzle possessed by wool. Each and every bend of every individual filament of wool assumes an inclination for travel independent of each other and of the general inclination of the perfect fibre.

**AN AFFLICTED ONE.**—The roughest and hardest hands can be made soft and white in the space of a month by doctoring them a little at bed-time; and all the tools you need are a nail-brush, a bottle of ammonia, a box of powdered borax, and a little fine white sand to rub the skins off, or a cut of lemon, which will do even better, for the acid of the lemon will clean anything.

**DOUBTFUL.**—The form of application for a patent is obtainable at a money order office. It costs £10s., and when it is filled up it is sent with a specification, either provisional or complete, of the invention to the Comptroller, Patent Office, 25, Southampton-buildings, Chancery-lane, London. No other payment is necessary to obtain provisional protection for nine months.

**IN DOUBT.**—Whether a lady should tell her age or not to one who asked it would be purely a matter of will and discretion on her part. Were the asker on terms of sufficient social intimacy and friendship with her to save his question from rudeness and impertinence she would, of course, be on such terms with him as would render it perfectly proper for her to decline point-blank to answer him.

**IGNORAMUS.**—We should be very glad to answer your question if we could, but not knowing you we cannot tell what books you would need most. Your best plan would be to apply to someone who instructs adults. By all means read the newspapers. It will keep you au fait with what is going on in the world. You write a very nice, clear hand. A little practice would perhaps improve it.

**PETER THE GREAT.**—A permanent place on board a P. & O. liner is to be preferred before a place on board a ship of war. In the navy a skilled shipwright's wages are 25s. weekly, with a certain amount of provisions, and by good conduct as many as three badges, entitling to 5d. per day extra, can be gained. A man may enlist for twelve years. He must possess a fair knowledge of boat and ship building.

**ROSA DARTLE.**—One explanation of the reason why a barber uses a striped pole as a sign is that, in the middle ages, barbers were also blood-letters. That is to say, when a person required to be bled, a barber, and not a physician, was called upon. Hence the pole with a white and red stripe running along its length to represent a bleeding arm with a white bandage around it. This sign having been once adopted, and having become known the world over, it has been retained, although the barbers themselves for the most part have no idea of its origin.

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ALL LETTERS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON READER, 354, Strand, W.G.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 354, Strand, by J. R. SPRECK; and printed by WOODFALL AND KNECHT, 70 to 76, Long Acre, W.G.